

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

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No. 141.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 4, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AFTER THE PICKPOCKETS; OR

KEEN WORK IN THE SHOPPING DISTRICT.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.



While Old King Brady seized the girl Harry grasped the young man. Each of the pick-pockets held a purse which they had stolen from the shoppers. A policeman rushed over to them, asking: "What's the matter here?"

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CHAPTER I.

CATCHING A PAIR OF THIEVES.

One pleasant afternoon, two Secret Service detectives, called the Bradys, walked into a big department store on Sixth Avenue, and asked for the proprietor. They were ushered into his private office.

Mr. Lacy rose from his desk, shook hands with the officers and said:

"I am glad your chief was so prompt in answering my appeal for help."

"How can we serve you, sir?" asked Old King Brady, the elder of the detectives, as he took off his big felt hat, and sat down on a chair.

"The shopping district has lately been overrun by a gang of the most daring and skillful pickpockets," replied the fat little merchant, "and our patrons have suffered much annoyance and great losses. We have tried to abate the nuisance by the aid of our private detectives, but found we were unable to accomplish anything. A meeting of the merchants of this district was called. I was elected chairman. It was decided to ask your department for detectives to run down the crooks who have been robbing our patrons. Accordingly I called up your chief on the telephone and asked him to send me a couple of his best and most experienced officers. As you and this youth, Harry Brady, have been detailed here, I take it for granted that you are looked upon as the most efficient men for the purpose."

Young King Brady, the youth, burst out laughing.

"I am not so sure that we are the best officers on the force, but we are familiar with all the most notorious pickpockets in New York. It would thus be an easy matter for us to know any of the villains when we meet them. Relying on our knowledge in this direction, the chief selects us to do the work for you."

"That's a very good reason for sending you here," said Mr. Lacy with a nod, as he sized up the young detective.

In Harry he saw a fine, handsome fellow, about of age, possessing an athletic figure clad in stylish garments. He was a bold, fearless youth, with plenty of perseverance, keen analytical power, and ambition to succeed.

The boy was a pupil of his companion.

Merely chance acquaintances, having the same name, they worked as partners, and by their skillful operations they made themselves dreaded by all the crooks in the country. Mr. Lacy had heard of their fame.

"Have you any specific complaint to make?" asked Old King Brady, pulling a plug of tobacco from his pocket and biting off a piece.

"Fifty," said the old merchant, emphatically.

"Give us an account of the losses," said the old detective, as he unbuttoned the faded blue frock coat he wore, and took a note book from the breast pocket.

Old King Brady was generally a very methodical man.

Tall, powerful, clean shaven, and precise in his habits and actions, he was old-fashioned in looks, but decidedly up to date in his methods.

He wanted a careful account of the victims, their losses,

and the appearance of the people suspected of being the crooks.

When he had those points written in his note book, Mr. Lacy said:

"Now you know pretty near as much about the matter as we do. I can only say in conclusion that if you two will rid the shopping district of these pickpockets, we merchants will give you a purse of \$10,000, which we have made up between us."

"We are not supposed to accept rewards for successful work," said Harry. "Even without such an incentive, you can rely upon us to do our very best work for you any way."

"It isn't our plan to hang up a reward," said Mr. Lacy, "but we have the privilege of making you a present of that money if you succeed in driving those scoundrels away from here. Do you recognize any of them by the descriptions I gave you?"

"Several," replied Old King Brady, with a nod.

"Are they professional pickpockets?"

"Yes."

"Who are they?"

"For instance, the handsome girl and good looking young man with her, who helped Mrs. Dow to arise, when she tripped on the stair in here, and missed her diamond bracelet, are Sammy Gunn and Ida King. They are two of the most adroit thieves in the city, and always travel and work together, as they were married a year ago."

"Knowing them, you are likely to recover that bracelet, then?"

"We may."

"How soon will you begin operations?"

"At once."

"Good! This is bargain sale day. There is an unusually large crowd of shoppers out. Several complaints have already been received here of the loss of valuables by our customers."

"Have you any objection to our using this office to disguise ourselves? Most of the crooks know us by sight. We therefore will be obliged to conceal our identity in order to get near them."

"I have no objection whatever."

Old King Brady nodded, smiled, and turning to his young partner, he said:

"Attired as females we would enjoy perfect immunity from suspicion, Harry. Here's a mirror. Fix yourself up."

The boy took several articles from a satchel he carried.

As the detectives were invariably provided with several costumes hidden under the reversible suits they wore, they rapidly made a complete and astonishing change in their outward appearance.

Within five minutes they were, to all outward appearance, two females.

Harry wore a stylish tailor made dress and a pretty bonnet. A becoming wig covered his head, and paint and powder upon his face erased all the harsh outlines of the male.

and gave him a soft, creamy complexion any girl would have been proud of. A few touches of a cosmetic on his eyelashes and eyebrows finished the job.

Old King Brady, as an elderly woman, wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, a cape, and a sedate dress, was simply unrecognizable.

Mr. Lacy watched the transformation with an amazed look.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "Such a wonderful change. You are both past masters at the art of skillful disguising. No one would know you were men. Even your walk, voices, and actions accord with the disguises."

"The secret of successfully disguising is to properly act the part one assumes," laughed Old King Brady. "We have perfected that art."

"Ready?" asked Harry, putting on a pair of kid gloves.

"Yes; go ahead," Old King Brady answered. "Good day, Mr. Lacy."

And looking like a couple of women, out they went.

First they passed through the store, looking like a mother and daughter, and keenly scanned every one with whom they came in contact.

"Not a gun in the place," Harry muttered finally.

"Let us try the sidewalk," suggested his partner.

"More likely to find our quarry there, Old King Brady."

"Big crush outside," said the veteran, as they passed out the door.

"Keep close to me, and we'll go around into Fourteenth Street," said Harry.

Without seeming to pay any particular attention to any one, the Secret Service men strolled up Sixth Avenue to the corner.

But there were few people in that vast throng who escaped their observation, and they pushed their way through the surging crowd, and turned Fourteenth Street at a leisurely pace.

Not far from the corner they suddenly caught view of a stylish couple moving on ahead of them, who attracted their attention.

The girl wore a big Gainsborough hat, and striped dress, and had a pretty, but rather reckless looking face.

Her companion was a man in an Alpine hat and light overcoat.

He wore a mustache, and had dark, piercing eyes.

Two handsomely clad ladies were in advance of the pair, and as the detectives came along, the man and the girl quickened their pace.

Upon reaching the two ladies, they separated, the man brushing past the lady on the inside and the girl jostling the one on the outside.

The detectives had their glances on the pair.

As quick as a flash, the man slipped his hand into the reticule carried by a strap at the lady's belt, and swiftly withdrew a pocketbook.

He hid it by closing his hand over it.

The girl he was with had plunged her slender hand into

the pocket of the lady she was jostling, and when it came out she held a purse.

So soft and deft had been the movements of the pickpockets that neither of their victims knew they had been robbed.

But the Bradys had seen the act.

They glanced at each other a moment, and Harry muttered:

"Know the pair?"

"Yes," asserted his partner. "Sammy Gunn and Ida King."

"Nab them!"

The detectives glided up to the pair.

Clad as women, they were unnoticed by the pickpockets until they had begun operations.

While Old King Brady seized the girl, Harry grasped the young man.

Each of the pickpockets held a purse which they had stolen from the shoppers.

A policeman rushed over to them, asking:

"What's the matter here?"

"Pickpockets," answered Old King Brady, quietly.

The startled shoppers paused upon seeing the two crooks struggling to get away from the Bradys, and one of the ladies who had been robbed cried:

"My goodness! My pocketbook is gone!"

"And so is mine," added the other, in blank dismay.

"These crooks have got your purses, ladies," shouted Old King Brady. "Just wait, and you'll get them back again."

The man Harry held drew a pistol out of his hip pocket.

CHAPTER II.

CAPTURED BY THE GANG.

The two pickpockets were amazed at the enormous strength shown by their captors. For two women, it was marvellous.

But the Bradys did not intend to betray their identity.

If they did, it might become public news, and forewarn the rest of the crooks that the detectives were after them.

In that case, they would take to cover, and baffle the Bradys' intention of capturing the whole gang.

Desperate over their unsuccessful attempt to get away, Gunn raised his revolver, aimed it at Harry, and shouted hoarsely:

"Let go, or I'll blow your brains out!"

"No, you won't," retorted the plucky young officer, as he doubled up his disengaged fist. "You won't shoot me, Sammy."

And smash went his fist against the crook's arm.

The blow was so heavy and landed in such a vital spot that the pickpocket's arm was momentarily paralyzed.

As all feeling left it, the pistol fell from his nerveless hand.

Scarcely had it touched the sidewalk, when the policeman dealt the crook a whack on the head with his club.

Uttering a groan, Sammy fell senseless.

Harry tore the stolen purse from his hand and the patrolman cried:

"Now will yer be good?"

"You've knocked him senseless," observed Harry.

"Sure I'd oughter kill him entirely."

"Ring up the wagon and lock him up."

"I will that," said the officer. "Mind him till I come back. Miss, you're the spunkiest gal I ever laid eyes on."

And he hurried away.

Old King Brady was not having any trouble with Ida, for she was not a very strong girl.

Having seized her by the wrists, he wrenched the stolen purse from her hand, and said in threatening tones:

"Now you keep quiet, Ida, or I'll wring your neck."

"Ah, you know me!" gasped the girl in some astonishment.

"Oh, yes; we are acquainted with you and Sammy."

"Then you are department store female detectives?"

"Of course," assented Old King Brady.

By this time the crowd gathering around them had swelled to enormous proportions. Everybody was interested and very curious.

Innumerable questions were asked on all sides, but the Bradys refrained from answering any of them.

The two ladies who had been robbed stood close by, pale and nervous.

"Madam," said one of them to Old King Brady, "can we have our pocketbooks, and get away from here?"

"No; not yet," replied the detective. "You must go to the police station and make a charge against those two crooks. If you can then identify your purses, you may have them back."

"But we don't want to get mixed up in such a disgraceful affair," feebly protested one of the ladies.

"Nonsense. It's your duty to see that these abominable people are locked up, so they can't prey on any one else."

"That's true enough."

"Will you do your duty?"

"Yes."

A few minutes later the police patrol wagon dashed up to the spot, and Sammy having recovered, was handcuffed to his partner, and the pair were driven rapidly away.

The detectives, accompanied by the two ladies, followed them.

Arrived at the police station, a charge was made against the pickpockets, and they were locked up.

Having identified their purses, the ladies received them and departed, glad enough to get their property back.

The Bradys returned to the shopping district.

Another crook in the crowd who witnessed the arrest of Sammy and Ida had been impressed with the belief that they were the female detectives of one of the big stores.

He lost no time in imparting this information to his pals, for they were nearly all members of an organized gang.

The Bradys were pointed out to the villains, when they came back from the police station, and in an hour all the crooks had them marked as a couple of dangerous females.

It then struck the gang that the two supposed female detectives were dangerous to their interests, and ought to be removed.

Accordingly a plot was formed to make away with them.

The Bradys, unknown to themselves, were shadowed by the crooks.

Ignorant of the danger they were in, they loitered about the big shops until after six o'clock, when the doors were closed.

Most of the shoppers had gone home.

By half past six, hundreds of salesmen, salesladies, cash boys, porters and other employees of the department stores began to swarm out of the huge buildings on their way home.

Harry then said to his partner:

"No use of remaining here any longer."

"All the crooks seem to have vanished," said Old King Brady.

"They don't prey on the poor shop girls."

"It wouldn't pay them to do so. It isn't a case of charity or consideration on their part that they don't. If it were Saturday night, I'd have my doubts about your assertion."

"Why?" asked Harry.

"Because the pickpockets would know that every employee going home from these stores have their pay envelopes in their pockets. And as there is nothing sentimental about a professional crook, he would rob a poor girl as quick as he would rob a rich woman."

"You haven't got much faith in their good-heartedness."

"Not a particle. A professional thief would rob anybody."

"Well, as there is no more work for us to do here," said Young King Brady, "let's go down Eighteenth Street, have our supper in one of those little restaurants, and then go over to Secret Service headquarters. The chief will be anxious to get a report from us."

They proceeded to the restaurant.

Here they remained an hour.

It was dark when they emerged.

Spotted by the pickpockets to whose gang Sammy and Ida belonged, the detectives found themselves confronted by a party of six men the moment they reached the sidewalk.

They were taken completely by surprise.

At one glance they recognized the crowd as well-known thieves whose portraits were in the Rogues' Gallery.

"Danger!" muttered Old King Brady in alarm.

"Look out! They're going to tackle us," Harry added quickly.

Alert as they were, the detectives could not prevent what followed.

A man sprang behind each of them.

Impeded in their movements by their dresses, the Bradys made a desperate effort to combat their foes.

But they could not prevent them from garroting them.

Each of the crooks flung an arm around their necks from the rear, and holding them so they could not defend themselves, the villains who stood before them rushed in with drugs.

Two handkerchiefs saturated with chloroform were pressed against the detectives' nostrils.

Forced to breathe the drug, and unable to yell for aid, they were overpowered by the chloroform.

Back into the arms of the garroters fell the gallant pair, stupid from the drug.

"Call the cab!" hoarsely cried one of the crooks, who seemed to be the leader of the gang. "We must hurry them away."

One of the men dashed down the street.

There he met a cab, and spoke to the driver.

While the gang was binding and gagging the unconscious detectives, the cab came racing toward them.

They had to hurry, for some people were coming up the street.

Into the vehicle the detectives were lifted.

The leader of the gang got in with them, and ordered one of the others to get up with the driver.

Bang! went the door shut, and the four remaining men slunk away.

Off went the cab, just as the pedestrians drew near.

A good mare drew the carriage.

It went racing down Eighteenth Street in the direction of the North River, and within the vehicle, the detectives began to revive.

They finally regained their faculties.

It only occupied a moment for them to realize what had happened to them, and they felt their hearts sink when they saw who was in the cab with them.

Moreover, their disguises were so disarranged by the furious struggle, that the crook now saw who they really were.

He was a slender, plainly clad man, with a smooth, dark face, sharp features, and a wicked pair of eyes.

The man was known as "Yellow Jack." He was a Mexican.

"Know me, don't you?" he chuckled, when he saw them revive. "And I know you, too. You are the Bradys. Those were clever disguises. But it's all the worse for you that I've found it out. We hate you, and fear you, and we ain't going to let you interfere with us any longer. Now that you are in my power, I'll make short work of the pair of you. With weights at your heels, I'm going to drop you both into the river."

CHAPTER III.

AN ATTEMPTED MURDER.

The diabolical threat of Yellow Jack made the detectives shudder, for they knew he was a murderous man, and might carry out his plan.

As the Bradys were gagged, they made no reply, however.

The crook held a dark lantern in his hand, with which he had been examining the pair while they lay unconscious.

By the dazzling gleam they could see the satanic features of the crook, and also observed that he had been picking their pockets.

Luckily he got but little money, but he had their pistols and handcuffs, and they decided that it was by finding the latter that Yellow Jack's suspicions of their identity had first been aroused.

Neither of the detectives could liberate himself.

Ropes bound their wrists behind their backs, and held their ankles together in the most painful manner.

The captain of the pickpockets grinned at the looks of uneasiness he had brought to their faces, and went on saying:

"At first we thought you were a pair of female detectives attached to one of the stores. We made up our minds to put you where you would be harmless, when we saw you grab Sammy and Ida. But now that your true identity is known to us, you can bet we will go a point further. There isn't a member of our gang who don't owe you a grudge."

The detectives winced.

Both knew how true his words were.

They were hated and feared.

It did not surprise them now to learn that the villains were going to murder them. Indeed, they expected nothing else, for many other attempts had been made in the past by their enemies to kill them.

Yellow Jack was watching them as a cat watches a mouse, and the fiendish grin on his dark face broadened when he saw that he had succeeded in alarming the pair.

"You don't like the trouble you're in," he said. "I can see it in your face. The prospect is gloomy. When the tide goes out, it is going to drift over your dead bodies. We can drown you without any trouble, and nobody will know how you happened to wind up your lives in the water."

Just then the cab stopped.

Yellow Jack glanced out of the window.

"On the pier now," said he grimly. "We've got a boat near here. You'll take your last ride in it within a few minutes."

The cab door was opened by Yellow Jack's pal.

"Is that you, Dick?" he sang out.

"Ay, ay," replied a gruff voice. "We've reached the dock."

The villain alighted and held a conversation with the man, and they lifted Old King Brady and his pupil out of the carriage.

They were close to the string piece.

A long, narrow skiff was rocking on the water below.

Yellow Jack embarked, and Dick and the cabman lifted the two detectives over the string piece to him, and he laid them in the bottom of the boat.

The captain of the crooks returned to the pier.

After the cab drove away, the rest of Yellow Jack's gang appeared.

They had followed the cab afoot.

When the whole crowd got together, they held a whispered conversation, and finally all hands embarked in the skiff.

The painter was untied from the pile, the oars were seized, and a few moments afterward the skiff glided out on the river.

Black clouds above threatened rain, and no moon or stars shone forth.

In the darkness there was slight chance for the leaden hued boat to be seen gliding over the dark river.

Not a word was uttered by any one of the gang.

They feared interruption.

To get caught attempting to murder the detectives would go almost as bad against them in court as if the actual crime intended were committed.

Every one of them knew this.

So deadly was their enmity to the detectives, though, that they did not hesitate in the terrible course they were pursuing.

Out on the river they rowed until midstream was reached.

"Heave to!" Yellow Jack commanded.

The boat paused, and Dick growled:

"Where's ther weights?"

"Under your seat," replied the captain.

Dick fumbled about and found two pieces of railroad iron.

They weighed fifty pounds apiece, and were amply heavy to sink the detectives so their bodies would not rise to the surface again.

Just as Dick was about to tie one of them to Harry's legs, the dip of oars and noise of moving rowlocks reached their ears.

"Some one coming in a boat," muttered Yellow Jack.

"They may pass us in the darkness," replied Dick.

"Don't run chances."

"What'll we do?"

"Never mind the weights. Chuck them overboard."

"They're bound to sink, anyway, cap."

"So I figure."

A light suddenly flashed out over the water.

It came from the other boat.

The lapping of the tide under the prow of the pickpockets' boat had been heard by the unseen crew, and attracted their attention.

For a few moments the bright glare shone forth.

"Hurry," gasped Yellow Jack. "We are seen."

"Ahoy, there!" came a hail.

"Get rid of them, I tell you!" panted the villain, excitedly.

He saw the light gliding toward them rapidly.

It was impossible to see who was in the boat.

Dick and one of the other men picked up Old King Brady, poised him in the air an instant, and hurled him into the water.

There was a splash, and the boat rocked violently.

Down sank the bound and gagged detective under the surface.

There sounded the excited tones of men after this was

done, for the occupants of the other boat had witnessed the dreadful deed.

"Hurry! Blast you, hurry!" Yellow Jack gasped.

They picked up Young King Brady, but just then there sounded the crack of a pistol, and Dick gave a yell and said:

"I'm shot!"

He dropped Harry, and the boy fell in the water.

"Grab your oars!" roared Yellow Jack.

In an instant more they were rowing away with might and main, followed by a perfect fusilade of pistol shots.

Within a few moments they were beyond range of the bull's-eye lantern which had been reflecting its rays upon them.

It came from a harbor police boat.

The officers had seen the attempted murder.

"Don't follow them!" roared their captain. "Try to save their victims."

"They went over right here," said a policeman.

"And there's one now," shouted the captain, as his light swept the surface of the water and rested on Harry's figure.

"A woman!"

The boy was floating, calm and collected, but could not utter a word.

"Save my companion," he thought. "He can't swim. Oh, if I could only let you hear me. Poor Old King Brady! He will perish!"

And such was the fact, the old detective could not swim.

Old King Brady's body had risen and gone down again close to the boat, and he was half smothered.

But he did not remain under water long before his body rose for the second time, and a policeman reached over the gunwale and seized him.

He was dragged into the boat, and another officer, armed with a boat hook, got hold of Young King Brady's clothes.

The boy was an expert swimmer, but bound as he was, he could only let himself float, when he first rose to the top.

Still that was quite sufficient to save his life, and he was soon lying unharmed beside his half drowned companion.

"Two ladies, bound and gagged!" commented the captain of the police boat, as he glanced at the dresses they wore.

He was amazed at the attempt upon their lives.

With his knife he cut bonds and gags, and Harry bent over Old King Brady and began to resuscitate him.

This was quickly accomplished, and the captain began to say:

"Madam——"

"We are the Bradys," interrupted Harry. "These are disguises."

"The Secret Service men?" gasped the astonished captain.

"Exactly. We had this attempt made upon our lives by a gang of crooks we are after. But by saving us you baffled them."

"They must be pretty desperate men."

"None worse in New York, sir."

"How is your partner?"

"All right, now."

The old detective soon sat up and learned what happened.

A grim smile crossed his face, and he commented:

"We were probably born to be hung, as we were not drowned. Take us ashore, captain, and when we get over the evil effect of this adventure, we will hunt down that gang more relentlessly than ever. We owe them a grudge now."

"Give way, boys," said the police officer.

Down went the oars, and with steady strokes they propelled the skiff to the nearest dock, where the Bradys debarked, thanked the policemen, and hurried away.

CHAPTER IV.

A PACKAGE MARKED C. O. D.

On the following Saturday the detectives walked into Secret Service headquarters, and passed into the chief's private office.

"Well, boys," said the head of the department, wheeling around in his chair and facing the pair, "I didn't know what became of you during the past few days. What have you been doing?"

"Trying to run down the pickpockets in the shopping district," answered Old King Brady, taking a fresh chew of tobacco, and sitting down in a chair. "We've been having a gay old time."

"I see by the police returns that you captured a pair of them."

"Oh, yes; but their gang afterward captured us, and came pretty near to making food of us for the fishes."

"Indeed! Let me hear about it."

Old King Brady gave him an account of all that happened.

The chief listened attentively to all he said, and a grave look settled upon his face.

"Since the day of our escape from the river," said Old King Brady, "Harry and I assumed a different disguise every day, and haunted the stamping grounds of those crooks. We hoped to avenge ourselves by arresting the whole gang. But you can imagine our disappointment when we found that they had all taken to cover, and not a crook has been seen ever since in the shopping district."

"Very likely they imagine they drowned you," replied the chief, "and as the harbor police witnessed this dastardly attempt upon your lives, they fear they have been marked, and are keeping out of the way until the affair blows over."

"As our dead bodies have not yet been reported in the newspapers as having been picked up in the river," said Old King Brady, "they may be under the impression that we were carried out to sea by the tide. I am in hopes that they will soon gain confidence from hearing nothing of our having been found, and show their hands again."

"No doubt they will."

"It's my impression that Yellow Jack has got the gang organized on a certain plan, and is working them for all they are worth. The number of robberies executed by these crooks has become appalling. We must break up that gang

quickly and effectively. If we don't, the losses will soon become enormous."

"Do you know where the gang hangs out?"

"No; not as a gang. But we know where to find some of the individual members. It's useless to arrest them, however, without evidence of the crimes they have committed, for they would secure a good lawyer, get out on bail and skip. We must have sufficient evidence to convict them before making an arrest."

"And you have none yet?"

"Only against the six who tried to murder us."

"Do you know who the members of the gang are?"

"Some; not all. Harry and I are going to look over the gallery before we depart to impress the faces of some of the New York pickpockets on our minds. If we run across them we will be surer of recognizing them by so doing."

"Quite a sensible plan," said the chief, smiling, and taking a cigar from his pocket. "It's just as well to keep your memory refreshed all the time. Some of those crooks have a habit of changing the looks of their features by shaving or by letting their beards and mustaches grow. As those things make a wonderful change in the face of a man, it's difficult under some circumstances to recognize them when you meet them."

They talked over the matter at some length further with the chief, and then went into another room.

Here they found some big folding frames on the wall filled with photographs of crooks of all kinds.

Each picture had a number, a name, a brief biography, and an accurate description of the original.

The detectives spent an hour studying the class of men they were after, and then left headquarters and went across town.

They had a purpose in view.

It was to familiarize themselves with the store detectives.

At some time they expected it might be a good thing for their purpose to be acquainted with these private sleuths.

Every store they visited had male and female spotters, and the Bradys soon became acquainted with the majority of them.

The last store they called at was that of Simpson, Hooper & Co.

While standing talking to one of the firm, a district messenger boy came in with a very small package.

"Jewelry," said he. "Marked C. O. D. \$250. Give me a check, please."

Hearing this remark made to the cashier, Mr. Simpson turned sharply to the boy and said in brusque tones:

"Give me that package."

"Here it is, sir," said the boy, handing it over.

"Where did you get it?"

"A man brought it to our office for delivery."

"Where is your office?"

"Eighth Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street."

"Are you to bring the money back to him?"

"Yes, sir."

A faint smile crossed Mr. Simpson's face, and turning to Old King Brady, he whispered:

"This is a swindle of some sort. We have not ordered a piece of jewelry in a month. I know this, for I write out the jewelry orders myself. We have all we've already ordered. Open that parcel and see what's in it, Mr. Brady."

The detective tore the wrapper from the package.

It covered a small wooden box, and when the lid was pried off, Old King Brady found the box filled with cotton batting, in the midst of which lay a small, cheap, gold-plated pin.

It was not worth ten cents.

Holding it up for inspection, the old detective remarked dryly:

"Your keenness has saved your firm about \$249.90, Mr. Simpson."

"So it appears. I wonder who the swindler is?"

"Perhaps we might land him by going back after the boy."

"Why not go with him?"

"Because the party who sent this box may waylay the boy on the way back to his office, to see that he is not being shadowed."

"I never thought of that."

"We must put up a job on him."

"How?"

"Catch him in a trap."

"I'll aid you all I can."

"Fill out a check, but don't sign it, and give it to the boy."

"And then?"

"We'll do the rest."

"Very well, Mr. Brady."

The merchant told the messenger boy to wait.

On the parcel was written "From Biffany & Co."

Having made out a check and shown it for an instant to the boy, Mr. Simpson put it in an envelope, and made the messenger sign a receipt for it, after which the boy departed.

The Bradys were after him in a flash.

He boarded a Sixth Avenue car going up-town, and the officers jumped into a cab they had in waiting and followed him.

Reaching Thirty-fourth Street, the boy transferred to a cross-town car, going west, still pursued by the Bradys in their carriage.

When the cab drew near Seventh Avenue, a rough looking man with a bristly mustache jumped on the car, and Harry pointed at him and cried:

"There's Dick Plummer, by jingo!"

"See, he's accosting the messenger boy," added Old King Brady.

"Yes; and now the lad is giving him the envelope containing the check of Simpson, Hooper & Co.," laughed Harry.

"Dick must have got up that job."

"The evidence of it is before us."

"He may have had accomplices," suggested Old King Brady.

"By shadowing him we can find out."

"There he goes—jumping off the car, Harry."

"He's a sly villain. Won't go near the office with the boy."

The pickpocket was going down Seventh Avenue rapidly now, and Harry ordered his driver to follow the man.

When Dick reached the corner of Thirty-third Street, he glanced keenly around to see if any one was following him on foot.

Satisfied that he was not being pursued, he suddenly darted into a hallway beside a liquor saloon.

Taking Mr. Simpson's envelope from his pocket, the rascal eagerly tore it open, and pulled out the check.

He intended to indorse it, and get some one to cash it for him.

But the moment he studied it and missed the signature he knew it was not worth the paper it was printed on.

He let out a furious volley of oaths, tore the check in a dozen pieces, hurled them upon the floor and jumped on them.

"Fooled!" he fairly yelled. "By this time they know what's in the package, and anybody goin' back ter git this check signed would walk right inter ther paws of a cop. Curse them, they must have suspected something wrong!"

And he rushed from the hallway frantic with chagrin.

CHAPTER V.

ON BOARD THE STEAMER.

"He has discovered how we tried to trick him, Harry," chuckled Old King Brady, as they followed the pickpocket down town, "and he is evidently shrewd enough not to send the check back for signature."

"We must not let him get too far away, or he may give us the slip," said Young King Brady. "Our best plan is to arrest the man, and when we get him behind the bars, try to wring a confession from his lips, whereby we can catch the rest of his gang."

"I have no objection to that plan."

Harry called to the driver to stop, and he alighted.

On the corner stood a gray-bearded old gentleman in a high hat.

He took a fine gold watch from his pocket and glanced at it to see the time, just as Dick came toward him.

The pickpocket saw the valuable watch and his eyes glistened as the old man replaced it in his vest pocket.

Dick was desperate over the failure of his scheme to swindle the big department store, and he resolved to compensate himself for the loss by stealing the old man's watch.

Assuming a careless air, he walked straight up to his intended victim and said to him in pleasant tones:

"You just dropped a quarter, Mister."

"Goodness me! Did I? Where?" asked the old gentleman.

"Down there," answered Dick, pointing at his victim's feet.

The old man glanced down to look for the coin, and Dick banged his hand down on top of the old gentleman's stove-pipe hat.

It was jammed down over his eyes.

Up went the man's hands to remove the hat.

As he raised his arms, Dick, with a grin, reached out, seized his victim's watch chain, jerked the time-piece from the old man's pocket, and detached it from the swivel.

"A regular lead pipe cinch!" chuckled the crook in pleased tones.

He was just going to run away, when Harry and Old King Brady pounced on him, and each one seized an arm.

A cry of affright escaped the pickpocket.

"We've got you, Dick," exclaimed Old King Brady, triumphantly.

"Good Lord! It's them Bradys!" roared the crook in tones of horror.

"Just so."

"Alive and well, too."

"Of course. You couldn't drown me."

"Le' me go."

"Not much. We caught you right in the act."

So saying Old King Brady took the watch from him, and Harry snapped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists.

By this time the old man who had been struggling to get his head out of the high hat, managed to pull it off.

His dangling watch chain told him how he had been robbed.

"Police! Thieves!" he yelled, glaring wildly around.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Old King Brady.

"I've been robbed!"

"Of this watch?"

"Yes."

"Come and get it."

"There's the villain who picked my pocket."

"Well, we've got him safe enough."

"Call a policeman."

"No need to. We are detectives."

"Oh, I sec. Arrest the scoundrel."

"We intend to."

"I'll make a charge against him."

"Come along, then, and we will run him right in."

"By thunder! He's a slick article," growled the old gentleman, as he walked along with them. "I couldn't imagine what he knocked my hat down over my eyes for, until I missed the watch."

"Didn't you feel him pull it from your pocket?"

"No. It's wonderful how dexterously he did that job."

"Practice is what did it," said Old King Brady. "He's a professional."

"I'll never trust another stranger again as long as I live."

"Yer an old fool," growled Dick, contemptuously.

"This is twice in an hour we got the best of you, Dick," said Harry.

"What d'yer mean by that?"

"You tried to swindle Simpson, Hooper & Co. out of a check."

The pickpocket scowled.

Glaring at the officers he asked fiercely:

"Did you play that trick on me?"

"We did."

"Well, I'll be blowed!"

"It so happened that we were in the store when your messenger entered with the bogus parcel of jewelry, and it was owing to us that you got the unsigned check. By following the messenger boy, we found you, and this is the result."

Dick began to swear.

He was as mad as a man could be when he found out how cleverly the detectives had duped and got the better of him.

Finally he remarked in tones of bitter acrimony:

"It ain't no use for a bloke to think he's awful smart, 'cause there's always somebody afloatin' aroun' what knows a blamed sight more'n he does. I'm a chump clear through."

And with this he lapsed into silence.

Having reached the police station, they arraigned him before the captain, made a charge, the old man verified it, and when his pedigree was taken, they searched him.

Several pawn tickets and an excursion ticket were among his effects, and Old King Brady took possession of them and said:

"I presume these tickets represent some of the things you've stolen in the past. Any way, I'm going to look them up, Dick."

"Confound it! why didn't I sell them tickets?" growled the man in tones of chagrin. "I'm always makin' a bungle of something lately."

"Do you always sell your pawn tickets?"

"'Most always. Dead men tell no tales, yer know."

He was taken away and put in a cell.

The Bradys then went back to the shopping district.

But they could not accomplish anything as all the stores were closed Saturday afternoons, owing to the hot weather.

The detectives therefore proceeded to the shop of the pawnbroker who had issued the tickets they found in Dick's pockets.

It was on Eighth Avenue near Bethune Street.

An examination of the jewelry convinced the detectives that the property was stolen, as most of it was engraved with the owner's initials.

The old detective had a record in his note book of a lady who had been robbed in Lacy & Co.'s store of just such goods.

Her initials were the same as those on the jewelry, and the description she gave of a man she saw near her at the time she was robbed fitted the general appearance of Dick Plummer.

Having her address, the detective sent for her.

The pawnbroker pretended to have forgotten who presented the jewels. He had no desire to aid the detectives, for he knew that if they established the fact that they were stolen, he would have to give them up, and lose the money he had advanced Dick on them.

When the lady arrived and saw the jewels, she said at once:

"They are mine. Oh, can't you let me have them?"

"We can replevin them for you by law," Harry answered.

"I know an easier way, madam," said the pawnbroker, slyly. "Pay me what I advanced on them and they are yours. Legal litigation will cost you more than they are worth."

"I don't know but what you are right," said the lady, as she drew out her pocketbook. "And as I hate publicity I'll do as you suggest, and thus put a speedy end to the matter."

The Bradys objected to this plan.

As she insisted, however, they let her have her own way, and she got possession of her jewelry, and departed well satisfied.

When the Bradys left the pawnbroker's, Harry glanced at the excursion ticket, and he saw that it called for a trip to Coney Island, on board the steamer Grand Republic, to take place next morning.

"It looks to me as if Dick and his pals meant to work the excursion boats on Sundays," remarked the boy, "and if we go on the trip we may find some of the gang aboard."

"We may as well try your theory," laughed Old King Brady, "and if we find any more of them, nothing will give me greater pleasure than to put the ruffles on them and pull them in."

They finally went home.

On the following morning they went to the pier, foot of West Twenty-third Street, and boarded the big steamer.

There was a tremendous crowd on board, and as the Bradys were disguised as a couple of sailors, they were not recognized.

Mingling with the crowd when the boat swung out in the river, they made a tour of the two decks, carefully sizing up the people they met, in an effort to locate the pickpockets.

Within a short time their efforts were crowned with success, for when they reached the forward deck, Harry said:

"The boat is alive with crooks. I've already recognized a number."

"And so have I, Harry," replied his partner. "Now get ready to arrest all you see. I am going to rid this boat of the whole bunch, and there will be a hot time here in a very few minutes."

CHAPTER VI.

STEALING DIAMOND EARRINGS.

When the steamer reached the Narrows, the detectives observed a pickpocket called Nick Connors following a fat woman, who wore a profusion of jewelry.

She seemed to be alone, and the crook pursued her from the upper deck down into the saloon and thence by a companionway to the lower deck.

Down there it was dark and gloomy, and but few people were about.

"He's going to get her jewelry if he can," muttered Old King Brady, as they crept after the designing crook.

"Jostle him and interrupt his game," advised Harry.

"Pretend to be drunk."

"All right."

Darting forward, Old King Brady bumped into the man. He reeled back, and the crook scowled and yelled angrily at him:

"Say, what are you doing?"

"Beg parding, cap," muttered the old detective, saluting with one hand and bracing himself up against the wall with the other.

"Look out where yer goin' next time."

"Ay, ay, sir. 'Spects I'm three sheets in the wind, mess-mate. No offense, I hope. Lost me sea legs intirely, sir."

"So one would imagine."

"Come an' splice the main brace."

"I don't want no drink."

"Git out. Don't be bashful. I've got ther price, yer lubber."

"Oh, dry up an' le' me alone."

Nick started to go off, but the detective grabbed his arm. Clinging to it, Old King Brady roared:

"Avast thar, now! Yer ain't a veerin' off that way arter me foul'in' yer timbers in sich an unmannerly way, I kin tell yer. There's plenty grog aboard, an' you must have some, or dash me if I won't be mad as thunder."

"I tell you I don't want none."

"Nonsense!"

"Le' go of my arm."

"Blast me if I will."

"Do yer want me ter smash yer in ther jaw?"

"Bless yer, no. I've got too much regard for my figger-head."

"Well, that's what I'll do if yer don't git away."

And Dick jerked his arm from Old King Brady's grip, and rushed off into the crowd, where he disappeared.

Harry burst out laughing.

"-Couldn't hold him," said he.

"He's bound to rob that fat woman."

"So it seems."

"Come aft; that's where he went."

Running through the gangway, they reached the after deck, which was almost deserted, and prowled around.

Both the woman and the crook had vanished.

Suddenly, however, they heard a smothered cry for aid.

It came from behind the closed door of a storeroom, and was in the unmistakable tones of a woman.

"Hark!" exclaimed Harry, pausing.

"Where do those tones come from?"

"Hanged if I can locate the voice."

"Help! Help!" screamed the voice again.

This time Old King Brady located the sound, and rushing to the door of the storeroom, he pulled it open.

Bathed in gloom, the interior was not to be seen, and the old detective drew out a match and lighted it.

Ere he could hold it up, the figure of a man darted out of the room and plunged away in the gloom.

Out rushed a woman after him.

When she came into the light of a lantern the detectives saw that she was the woman the crook was watching.

Her ears were bleeding.

"What's the matter?" demanded Harry, seizing her.

"Oh, oh, oh!" she cried. "Mein Gott! Dis vas awful!"

"Tell me what's the matter."

"Vell, I coom town' here, und a garstiger man pull me into dot rooms, make der toor shuts, und crab me by der earrinks yet. Den, py shiminey, he cherks dem oud ohf mein ears alretty, und gief me mein nose a blow, und run away! O-o-o—boo-hoo!"

And she burst out crying.

Despite her misery, the Bradys had to smile at her language.

They saw that the crook had torn her ears when he ripped the diamond earrings from them.

Consoling the woman as best they could, they rushed away.

They saw him going up a companionway.

He looked back.

Observing the detectives in hot pursuit, the rascal hastened his movements and reached the saloon deck.

Here they saw him dash toward a crowd of four men, all of whom they recognized as crooks.

The thief passed through the crowd, saying something, and Old King Brady frowned and muttered:

"He has passed the swag to one of that bunch."

"They are melting away," replied Harry.

"You watch them, and I'll corral the thief."

"Go right ahead."

On rushed the old detective, chasing Nick through the cabin, and he finally pounced on him on the forward deck.

"I've got you," he announced, grimly.

"Don't handle me rough, boss," pleaded the crook.

"Then behave."

"I'll do what's right."

"Where are those earrings?"

"What earrings?"

"The ones you stole from the woman down stairs."

"I didn't hook nothin' from no woman."

"You lie."

"I'm tellin' ther truth."

"No, you ain't. I'm a fly cop, my boy."

"Jist what I 'spected."

"Are you going to own up?"

"Search me if yer don't believe me."

"I will."

And Old King Brady did.

But he found no trace of the missing jewels.

That confirmed his original suspicion of the man, and he said:

"You've passed them to a pal."

"I didn't——" began the man.

Seeing he would not admit anything, Old King Brady drew out a pair of handcuffs and said in terse tones:

"No use to talk to you. Hands out."

"I won't."

"Going to fight, eh?"

"Yes," said Nick.

And he aimed a punch at Old King Brady that would have knocked him down had it landed.

Side stepping, the detective adroitly let the blow fly past his head, and sent in a hot left swing that caught the crook under the chin.

It lifted him clean off his legs and landed him on his back five feet away half stunned.

In a moment more he was fettered.

His friends having followed, had seen what happened, and they made a rush for Old King Brady, intending to give him a severe beating and rescue their friend.

But Harry was behind them.

He observed their intention and drew his pistol.

Leveling it at the crooks, he shouted in stern tones:

"Halt! or I'll fire!"

They glanced around, saw him, paused and slunk away in great haste, each one fearing to get a bullet in his body.

Old King Brady seized his prisoner, and as the gang slunk away, Nick revived, sat up and asked confusedly:

"What has happened?"

"You were knocked out," replied Old King Brady.

"By you?"

"Exactly."

"Ah, now I remember."

"Tell me where you put those stolen earrings, or, by thunder! I'll give you another thump that will kill you."

Nick was terrified by this threat.

"Don't hit me again," he implored; "I'll tell."

"Well, what became of the jewels?"

"I passed 'em ter one o' ther gang."

"Just as I thought. Which one was it?"

"My pal, Tom Dixon."

"Where is he?"

"In the bunch."

"Harry, you mind him a while."

"Where are you going, Old King Brady?"

"In search of Tom Dixon."

And away he went.

CHAPTER VII.

TIED TO THE LOGS.

The pals of Nick Connors had a strong suspicion of the character of the men who had captured their friend, and disappeared.

Old King Brady carefully searched the steamer for some trace of Dixon, but failed to locate the crook.

He finally met the captain of the steamer, and after introducing himself, he said to the officer in serious tones:

"We are here after a gang of crooks, and captured one who stole a lady's earrings, and we need some assistance from you, captain."

"I'm sure I'll aid you all I can, Mr. Brady."

"Thank you, sir. I thought we could depend upon you."

"How can I serve you?"

"By holding our prisoner until we get back to the city."

"I can easily do that. I've got a lock-up aboard here."

"Where is it?"

"Bring your prisoner here and I'll show you."

Old King Brady went after Harry and the man, and the captain locked the thief up in a room set apart to hold prisoners.

All the way to the Island the detectives watched the excursionists, but failed to see any signs of the rest of the gang.

When the steamer swung up to the pier, the Bradys were the first ashore. They took up a position near the gang plank, and carefully scrutinized every one who left the steamer.

It occupied a long time for every one of the enormous crowd to leave the vessel, and nothing was seen of their men.

"Probably hiding aboard the steamer awaiting a favorable opportunity to get ashore without detection," commented Harry.

"We can conceal ourselves near by and find out," replied his partner, in anxious tones. "I don't want those fellows to give me the slip, Harry."

"By no means."

They went up the pier, and getting under the covered portion, they sat down at a table in a corner, ordered some beer and waited.

Finally they caught view of a man coming ashore, who reminded them of one of the crooks they were waiting for.

Old King Brady nudged Harry.

"Can't see his face," he commented, "but he looks a great deal like Tom Nixon, don't he, Harry?"

"It is he."

"Follow the man."

"Very well; he may have the jewels."

They glided along after the man.

The street was reached, and he glanced back at his pursuers.

Rushing over to a trolley car going up Surf Avenue, he sprang aboard, and the detectives rushed after him.

"That's Dixon," muttered Harry.

"He knows very well that we are following him, too."

"There's a beach-comber; hire him."

Stopping the driver, Old King Brady said to him:

"See that car?"

"Yes, sir," replied the driver.

"One passenger aboard of her?"

"Precisely."

"Follow that car closely. Don't let it get out of sight. We are intent upon arresting that passenger."

"Cops, eh?"

"Yes."

"Jump in, and I'll do my best."

Into the vehicle leaped the Bradys, and away they were carried in pursuit of the car.

An exciting ride ensued.

The fugitive saw them.

"There can't be any mistake on that score."

"He may not suspect our identity," remarked Old King Brady, in grim tones, "but he certainly knows we are pursuing him."

"He's going toward Norton's Point."

"I wonder where his pals are?"

"Still aboard the Grand Republic, I suppose."

On rushed the beach-comber in pursuit of the car, and it began to swiftly gain on the fugitive.

He stood it as long as possible.

Then his nervousness got the better of him, and he bounded to his feet, leaped off the car and sped across the meadows.

"Going for Gravesend Bay," muttered Harry.

"We can do the same thing, my boy."

"I wish this carriage could follow him over that swamp."

"We've still got our legs."

Paying the driver and ordering him to stop, they alighted and went off in pursuit of the fugitive.

A hard run followed.

Reaching the shore of the bay, they glanced around, but failed to see any sign of the man they were after.

"He is gone!" exclaimed Harry.

"Must be hiding."

"Where?"

"In those reeds."

"I can't see him."

"Wait a moment."

And Old King Brady went up on top of a sand dune, and glanced keenly around for some sign of the man.

His keen eyes finally rested on a dark object crouching in the weeds, and a smile of amusement crossed his face.

"I see him!" he exclaimed.

"Where?" eagerly asked the boy.

"Over near that old ruined pier."

"I don't see it."

"See those broken piles sticking up out of the water?"

"Yes."

"Now look to the left."

"Ah, now I see him."

"Watch me drive him from his covert."

Old King Brady drew his pistol.

Taking aim, he began to fire in the direction of the crouching figure, and produced the desired effect.

Unable to withstand the shots, the man emerged.

Rising, with his hands above his head, he yelled:

"Stop firing. I'll give in."

"It's Dixon," laughed Harry.

"Come over here," shouted Old King Brady.

The crook complied, and the old detective ceased firing. When Dixon reached them he was pale with fear, and cried:

"Don't kill me, boss. I haven't done anything."

"Oh, yes, you did," replied Old King Brady.

"What are you hunting me down for?"

"To get the diamond earrings your pal passed over to you aboard the boat," bluntly answered the old detective.

"But no pal did——"

"Silence, sir."

"Very well."

"Harry."

"What?"

"Search him."

"All right."

The boy walked over to the crook.

Almost the first thing his hands encountered when he thrust them into the prisoner's pockets were the stolen earrings.

"I've got them!" exclaimed the boy, holding them up.

"Dixon, you are proven a liar," said the old detective, contemptuously.

The man colored up, bit his lip and said nothing in reply.

He was deeply mortified.

But his chagrin did not last long.

He saw his pals creeping up behind the Bradys.

They had been pursuing them after they chased him over the meadow.

Armed with billies, they sprang at the detectives, and knocked the pair senseless with their clubs.

When the Bradys revived, half an hour later, they found themselves tied to two of the piles of the old ruined pier.

Buried to their hips in the water, they observed that the tide was rising around their bodies rapidly.

It was evident by the water marks on the timber that the tide would rise over their heads and drown them.

"We are in a sorry fix now," growled Old King Brady.

"This is the work of friends of Dixon's," replied the boy.

"No doubt. They design to drown us."

"Can't we yell for aid?"

"Won't do any good in this lonesome, deserted spot. There isn't a soul in sight, and I don't believe any one ever comes near this place. Harry, we are in great peril."

"Of course. But I haven't lost hope."

"Yell for help then. There's only one chance in a thousand, though, of our voices being heard."

They began to shout.

But there came no reply.

And every moment the deadly tide kept on rising higher and higher, threatening to drown them.

CHAPTER VIII.

A BIG RAID ON THE STEAMER.

The peril of the Bradys was extreme.

In that lonely spot, rarely frequented by human beings,

there was but very little probability of anybody finding them.

When the water was almost up to their chin, Harry said despondently:

"I fear we are doomed, Old King Brady."

"Up to the present no one has heard our cries, Harry."

"Friends of that crook must have done this."

"Undoubtedly; but I didn't see who hit me."

"Nor I."

"What became of the diamond earrings?"

"I dropped them and crushed them into the sand with my heel."

"Then the villains didn't recover them?"

"I'm sure they didn't."

"That's lucky."

They lapsed into silence a while.

The sun was going down over the hazy coast of Jersey on the other side of the broad expanse of water behind them.

On all sides half rotten piles rose from the water covered with green sea weed and rough barnacles, and along the Island shore stunted little pines grew up from the hills and dales of glistening white sand.

They could look across the bay ahead and see Bath Beach, and the grim embankments of Fort Hamilton.

Far off at sea a full rigged ship was coming in.

A dull, monotonous splash came from the waves that were lapping the logs and working in among the reeds on shore.

Gradually the dusk of twilight began to settle down.

Objects began to assume shadowy forms, and a big sea gull came skimming along in the air, gave a frightened cry at sight of them, and sped away toward Staten Island.

Finally Harry exclaimed:

"The water is up to my mouth now."

"Can't you tear yourself from your bonds?"

"No; I've tried a dozen times."

"I'm going to shout again."

"It's useless. In five minutes more I'll be dead."

"This is horrible. Taller than you, I'll last longer, as the rising tide won't reach my lips so quick. And if it comes to the worst, I'll have to possibly stand here and watch you perish."

"Never mind, old man; I ain't afraid to die."

"Help! Help!" yelled Old King Brady.

His voice rang out over the heaving water hoarse from past exertions, and he thought he heard an answering cry.

"What's that?" suddenly asked Harry.

"Did you hear it, too?" eagerly demanded the old detective.

"Yes; it came from——"

"Hark! I'll call again. Help! Help! Help!"

Then there came the distinct shout of:

"Hello. Where are you?"

At the same moment a white catboat came gliding around the point, a man at the tiller and another on deck at the port broad.

The detectives saw them.

A thrill of joy passed through them.

"This way," screamed Harry.

"I don't see you."

"We are tied to these piles."

"Ha, there you are!" cried the man at the tiller, peering under the boom of the sail. "Will, they are sunk to their necks."

"I see them!" excitedly answered the other.

"I'll steer right for that big broken pile."

Along shot the catboat, and as her prow went up in the wind, and the sail began to flap, Harry shouted:

"Jump in with a knife and cut us free."

"Are you bound there?" asked the steersman in surprise.

"Yes. Thieves did it out of revenge."

"Wait a moment and we'll pull you out of there."

Into the water he leaped, and wading and swimming over to the detectives, he plunged under water and cut Harry's bonds.

The next moment Old King Brady, too, was free.

All hands got into the boat.

There they learned that the two yachtsmen were on a pleasure trip, and, hearing their shouts, came to find them.

In return the Bradys explained who they were, and how they happened to get caught in their present predicament.

The two strangers were loud in denouncing the crooks.

Having thanked them, the Bradys went ashore.

When the catboat glided off over the bay the detectives went back to the place where they had been assaulted.

Close to a scrub pine Harry found the spot where he had dropped the diamond earrings, and dug them up.

They then abandoned their present disguises and assumed new ones.

When they started back for the pier they looked like a couple of shabby-genteel individuals in hard luck.

Profuse whiskers hid their features.

The Grand Republic was just about to depart, and the usual Sunday excursion crowd was aboard, when the detectives reached her deck and mingled with the throng.

"I wonder if our enemies are aboard?" queried Harry.

"We will find that out on the way up."

"If they are, we'll have them at our mercy. They can't get off the steamer, and we ought to nab every one of them."

"They've got our pistols and handcuffs. But I guess we can get along without those things."

When the steamer was well on her way back to New York, the Bradys began to examine the people aboard of her, and soon observed that four of the pickpockets were aboard, industriously plying their business.

The detectives smiled and winked at each other.

Then they hunted up the captain and found him talking to the lady who had lost her earrings.

Having made their identity known to them, and given the lady her jewels, they enjoined her to keep silent, and Harry said to the captain:

"If you will lend us a dozen good strong men, we will point out the crooks to them, and at a signal we'll pounce on

the whole gang, seize them and lock them up with the first prisoner."

"Certainly I will," replied the captain.

He thereupon called up the requisite number of men from the crew, told them what was wanted, and the Bradys explained what was required to make the raid a success.

They entered heartily into the plan.

Then the Bradys took them off in detachments, and to each three men they pointed out an individual crook whom they were expected to attack.

When everything was in readiness, Harry blew a whistle. It was the signal to begin hostilities.

Scarcely had the sound ended when four groups of men in different parts of the boat attacked the four crooks.

As the pickpockets were taken completely by surprise, they had no time to resist very strongly when the lusty sailors knocked them down and pinned them to the decks.

The spectators, knowing nothing of what was going on, grew excited and fled from the struggling men, thinking that some fights had started.

The Bradys, cool and collected, stood at the rail before the pilot house, watching their lieutenants.

Seeing how successful the sailors were, Harry yelled:

"Tie them up, boys. Tie them up!"

"Ay, ay!" returned the sailors.

"What's the fight about?" shouted a spectator.

"Those men are crooks. We are officers. The sailors are arresting them. Let everybody who has had their pockets picked or jewelry stolen report to the captain, and you may get the missing valuables back."

Every one was amazed.

When the crooks were fastened and imprisoned, the Bradys searched them and brought to light hundreds of dollars' worth of booty.

A quarter of an hour later an excited throng of people who had lost various valuables, or had them stolen, appeared at the door of the captain's cabin, where the Bradys were seated with the swag.

As fast as the complaints were received, and the property identified, the detectives handed over the missing articles.

Inside of an hour everybody who had been robbed by the crooks received back their valuables.

They were a grateful crowd, too, and when they found out who the detectives were, an excited individual sprang up on a bench, waved his hat and yelled enthusiastically.

"Three cheers for the Bradys, the greatest detectives on the face of the earth! Now, friends—all together!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" shouted the huge crowd.

So many voices swelled a noise like thunder above the music of the band and the throbbing of the machinery.

It brought a tingling sensation flying through the nerves of the gallant detectives, and they doffed their hats and bowed their acknowledgments again and again.

They were the lions of the hour on board that big steamer, and when she reached her pier they felt rather proud when they led their five prisoners ashore, and put them in jail.

CHAPTER IX.

WORKING A GAMBLING DEN.

The wholesale arrests of the pickpockets, coupled with their knowledge that the Bradys were pulling them in, seemed to have inspired the rest of the gang with alarm during the ensuing week.

For not one of them appeared in the shopping district.

The Secret Service men had an easy time of it.

No reports of pockets having been relieved of their valuables reached headquarters, or the offices of the big dry goods stores.

This was mainly owing to the fact that the crooks learned by the newspaper reports that their plans to drown the detectives in Gravesend Bay had been a failure.

It became necessary for the Bradys to betray the fact that they were very much alive, when they appeared in court at the trial of the prisoners they had made, in order to give their testimony upon which the rascals were tried, convicted and sentenced.

An effort had been made by the Bradys to pump some information out of their prisoners, whereby they might locate and arrest the balance of the gang.

But their attempt was a failure.

All the crooks were obstinate.

They absolutely refused to divulge any secrets of their pals, and went to prison defeating the officers.

It therefore devolved upon the Bradys to rely entirely upon their own ingenuity to run down the ones they wanted.

Assuming the deepest disguises, and haunting not only the shopping center, but also such places as the crooks were wont to frequent, they worked away in an attempt to find their quarry by day and by night.

But it was all to no purpose.

The villains kept well concealed, and defied them.

Less persevering men might have become discouraged over such continued want of success. But they did not.

Early in the following week an incident occurred which started the Bradys off on a new track.

At nine o'clock that night they started for home, and turning from Sixth Avenue into Twenty-fourth Street, they were heading for Madison Square when they heard the groaning of a man.

It came from the dark stage entrance of a theatre facing Twenty-third Street, and close to a bill-board they found the body of a well-dressed young man who lay partially in the gutter badly stunned.

"Hello!" said Harry, pausing and bending over him. "What's this?"

"Looks like the victim of thugs," Old King Brady commented.

"He has evidently been waylaid, beaten, knocked senseless and robbed," said the boy, pointing at the poor fellow. "See there, his head is bruised, his clothing dirtied and torn. His pockets are all turned inside out, and his hat has been smashed."

"Decent looking chap, too. Wonder who he is, Harry?"

"We'll soon find out, as he is reviving now."

They worked over him, and he recovered.

At first he was badly dazed.

When his wits returned he struggled to his feet.

Looking himself over very carefully, he tried to brush off some of the dirt, and then glanced curiously at the detectives.

"I guess I got it pretty hard," he finally ventured to remark.

"You were completely knocked out," replied Old King Brady.

"It's no more than I deserved."

"Why so?"

"Because I was fool enough to flash a big wad of the long green which I picked up on the races at Brighton to-day, and a bunch of grafters got next and followed me out of the joint where I was spending the coin. I'm a big chump, that's all."

"Did your assailants get much?"

"About twelve hundred, a pretty good ticker and a big parkler."

"Do you know who the crooks were?"

"Only one of them; and he's a bird. They call him Yellow Jack."

"Ah, the king of the pickpockets?"

"You know the duck, I see."

"We want him badly at headquarters."

"So you are a pair of fly cops, are you?"

"That's our profesh," laughed Harry, nodding.

"Well, I'm glad of it, for you may recover my things."

"I hope we can."

"My name is Pittsburg Peter, and I'm a plunger on the races," explained the young man. "The Hotel Aulic is my home, and I'd be glad to meet you chaps there any night in the week. If you'll bring me proof that Yellow Jack is up for a stretch, I'll give you a check for a thousand bones cold. I don't much care whether you dig up the valuables or not. All I want is to get back at Yellow Jack. I owe him a grudge, and I won't rest easy until I get square with that individual."

"Was it he who laid you out?"

"Yes; he soaked me on the nut with a sandbag. What makes me so sore on him is that I tipped him off to a lead pipe cinch the other day at Gutenberg, and he cleared up at least a century in bank notes. He repaid my kindness by giving me the razoo."

"Pretty mean man."

"You can bet your bottom dollar on that," declared Pittsburg Peter, vehemently. "He's a dog. Sneaked up behind me with three of his pals and biffed me before I could defend myself."

"Describe his companions."

"Couldn't do it to save my life. But I heard him call one of them Hungry Joe, and the man with the appetite called another of them Bug-House. I didn't hear the last

one's name, but he was a hunch-back with a big head and a flock of whiskers like an Italian bandit."

"I know him," said Harry. "He must be Humpy Dooley, the pocketbook snatcher. Those three always travel together."

"Then you know the bunch?"

"Yes. And they are the toughest propositions in the business."

"Nail them if you can. I'll be happy when they're pinched. I'm off."

"Can you navigate unaided?"

"Oh, yes; I ain't hurt much. Good night."

And off he went, whistling a lively tune, and the Bradys went on.

They could not help admiring the sporting man's grit, and when he disappeared around the corner, Harry remarked:

"He gave us a good line on his assailants, Old King Brady."

"Without knowing it, too."

"Do you know where that trio hold forth?"

"Yes; and I'm going straight to the joint now."

"Whereabouts is it?"

"In Fakeley's gambling den, corner of Forty-second Street and Sixth Avenue."

They retraced their steps and boarded a surface car, rode up to Forty-second Street, and alighted at the corner.

In a gloomy doorway they made a rapid change in their appearance, Old King Brady wearing a stove-pipe hat, eyeglasses, and a pair of luxuriant side whiskers.

Harry had a loud suit, a red wig and mustache, and he carried a cane.

Knowing how to gain admission to the gambling rooms over the saloon, they proceeded to go in.

It was a resort chiefly patronized by a middle class of gamblers who gloried in the fact that the owner enjoyed immunity from being raided by the police, on account of his political pull. In this belief, however, they were recently disappointed, as the place was pulled the same as any other resort of a similar character.

When the detectives entered the rooms, they found the place nicely fitted up and pretty well patronized by a gang of hazard players.

A stroll through the place showed them Hungry Joe busily engaged in a game of poker, while his pal, Humpy, was wooing the fickle Goddess Fortune at the faro table.

The Bradys, without any preliminaries, strode up to Joe, and as Harry's hand fell heavily on the crook's arm, he leaned over and whispered significantly in the man's ear:

"Joe, you are wanted by the chief down at headquarters."

The tall, thin, gaunt man looked at the boy in a startled way for an instant, laid down his hand, nodded and said:

"Gentlemen, I'll cash in. Important business demands my immediate attention. Joe got fifty-five blue chips, ten reds and two white ones. "Sorry I can't finish the game."

"Play off your hand," said one of the gamblers, tersely.

"Can I?" asked Joe of the boy.

Harry nodded, and the crook finished the hand and won.

A smile of satisfaction crossed his face.

He changed his chips for money, and turning to Harry, he said:

"Now I'm ready for you."

"Going to behave, or must I put the bracelets on you?"

"I'll be good. What's the charge?"

"Pittsburg Peter wants his valuables back."

"Oh," said Joe, with a scowl, as he realized what happened.

Old King Brady had gone over to Humpy and attempted to arrest him. But the dwarf had a peppery temper, and darting away from the faro table, uttering a furious imprecation, he drew a revolver and shot at the old detective.

The bullet missed and smashed a mirror.

Closing in on the hunchback, Old King Brady seized him and they fell struggling to the floor.

CHAPTER X.

HUNGRY JOE CONFESSES.

In a moment the struggle began between Old King Brady and the hunchback, the gambling resort was cast into a ferment of excitement.

Some one yelled: "Police!" and another shouted: "A raid!"

All the gamblers sprang to their feet.

Tables and chairs were upset, and a wild rush for the door began.

Yelling, cursing, punching and kicking each other in their frantic efforts to be the first to get out, the gamblers presented a pitiable sight. Every one of them were badly frightened.

Within a remarkably brief space of time the room was cleared of every one except the Bradys and their prisoners.

The old detective was a veritable giant in strength, and he had not the slightest difficulty in overcoming the dwarf.

Snapping a pair of handcuffs on the man's wrists, he said:

"What was the use of your fighting? You should have known you were no match for me."

"If I had my way I'd kill you," said Humpy, fiercely.

"Shut up, you fool," warned Hungry Joe. "Do you want to make matters worse for yourself?"

The hunchback took the hint.

He growled something under his breath and lapsed into silence.

Just then the manager of the dive rushed in breathlessly, and confronting the two detectives, he demanded:

"What is the meaning of this?"

Old King Brady coolly sized him up from head to foot.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"I'm the manager."

"Indeed?"

"Are you raiding this place?"

"Yes."

"On whose authority?"

"That's none of your business."

"It ain't, eh? Well, you'll find out you may get broke for this."

"Oh, you're a man with a pull, are you?"

"I am."

A contemptuous smile crossed the detective's face.

He pointed at the door, and asked quietly:

"Do you observe that exit?"

"I do."

"Then use it."

"Me?"

"Yes, you. And if you don't get out of here blamed quick, I'll pull you in, too. Do you understand?"

The manager gasped.

This was most unexpected.

"Good Lord!" he cried in astonishment.

"Get out!" roared Old King Brady, threateningly.

Casting an astonished glance at him, the man slunk out and disappeared in the hall like a whipped cur.

He had no desire to get arrested.

When he was gone Harry chuckled:

"You took the starch out of him beautifully."

"It's the first time this joint has ever been raided," said Hungry Joe. "The old bloke can't seem to understand it, you know."

"He'll soon get over that dream," said Harry, quietly.

"Say, Joe, what have you done with Pittsburg Peter's coin?"

"It's all blown in."

"And the jewelry?"

"Hocked."

"Where?"

"Bug-House has the tickets."

"Where's your other pal?"

"Whom do you mean?"

"Bug-House."

"Say, how the deuce did you find out who was in the party?"

"You gave yourselves away mentioning each other's names before the plunger," replied Harry, candidly.

"What chumps we were?"

"Bug-House had the jewels."

"And you and Humpy the money, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, you may have blown in the money you stole, but, by Jove! you've got a big money stock now to repay your victim."

"Take his coin out of my wad with interest, if you like, and let us go. That's a fair proposition, ain't it?"

"We'll get the money, but we'll hold you, just the same."

Joe was disgusted.

He knew it were useless to dictate.

The hunchback said nothing.

"Where is Bug-House?" asked Harry, finally.

"Don't know. He wasn't with us."

"Do you know where he hangs out?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"I won't tell."

"On the level——"

"I'm no squealer, Brady."

"Very well. Don't tell. We'll catch him anyway."

"Can't we buy you off?" demanded Humpy.

"No, sir."

"You're a fool."

"We are true to our duty."

"Then you can't be bought?"

"No; we can't."

The Bradys marched their prisoners out of the place, and took them to headquarters in a cab. They were brought into the chief's office, an account of the arrest was detailed to him, and he said:

"We'll call Pittsburg Peter here, and find out if these are his assailants. Ring up his hotel on the telephone."

This was done, and in half an hour the gambler appeared.

Pointing at the prisoners, the chief asked him:

"Do you recognize those men?"

"I do," replied Peter, after a hard stare at them.

"Who are they?"

"The gang who knocked me down and robbed me in Twenty-fourth Street. Have you got the other two?"

"Yellow Jack and Bug-House? No; not yet," said the chief.

"Then you expect to get them?"

"Sooner or later."

"I hope it will be sooner."

"Here's what we found in the prisoner's pockets. Look over the things and see if you recognize any of them."

"None of that jewelry is mine."

"We know that Bug-House pawned them."

"Has he got the tickets, or these chaps?"

"He has. How about the money?"

"I can't identify that in this wad."

"Well, you can reimburse yourself what they took from you."

The gambler nodded, and with a cheerful smile he counted Hungry Joe's wad, folded it up, put it in his pocket and said:

"This bunch will do me."

"How much in the package?"

"A cool thousand."

Here Joe interrupted excitedly:

"Say, old man, don't take that dough. I only got part of your roll. It ain't fair to make me repay the whole thing."

"Who got it, then?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Yellow Jack got half, and Humpy and I got the rest."

"Well," said the detective, "this man had better keep your money. If we ever catch Yellow Jack, we'll make him repay you."

"I don't like that arrangement."

"Why not?"

"You may never catch Jack."

"We would if we knew where to find him."

"Do you want me to tell you?"

"Yes; if you wish to get your money back."

Hungry Joe was desperate.

Penniless, he knew he would fare very badly when put on trial. With money he could buy a good defender, and run a chance of going free.

Realizing this, he finally said:

"If I tell you where to find Yellow Jack, will you run him down and recover my money from him?"

"Of course we will."

"That's a go, then, is it?"

"Yes. Where can we find him?"

"In the saloon, corner of Eighth Avenue and Twenty-third Street, any night."

"We'll try to land him."

"If you catch him, repay my money."

"We shall."

The prisoners were now led away and locked up, and the Bradys held a conference with the chief and departed.

Peter returned home.

Once in the street they hurried home, both feeling well satisfied with the progress thus far made.

CHAPTER XI.

TWO BOYS AND THE FENCE.

"By Jove! the pickpockets must have broken in boys to do their crooked work for them, Harry," remarked Old King Brady on the following afternoon, as he and his partner went through Twenty-third Street.

The cause of this remark was the action of a couple of little ragged urchins, whom the detectives saw nimbly darting through the throng, surging along the great shopping center.

Both detectives paused to watch the young pickpockets work.

The Bradys were disguised again, the elder man clad in the garb of an English swell, while Harry was attired in the costume of a minister.

In the middle of the block between Fifth Avenue and Sixth Avenue stood an immense dry goods store, in the window of which was an attractive display of marked-down dress goods.

It attracted an enormous crowd.

The detectives first had their attention drawn toward the two boys by the bunches of flowers they seemed to be trying to sell to the people passing by.

One was a red-headed, freckle-faced youngster of fifteen, with bare feet, ragged pants, an old torn shirtwaist, and a faded bicycle cap. His companion was a couple of years younger, and equally dirty and shabby.

While going through the crowd the boys were seen to slip their hands into the pockets of the passing people, and extract anything they could steal.

Purses, keys, handkerchiefs, chatelaines, watches, pins, and in fact any and everything women commonly carry in easy reach of such crooks, were stolen and conveyed swiftly into the pockets of the youthful thieves.

So eager were the boys in their dishonest work that they did not notice how keenly they were being watched by the two disguised detectives.

"Those flowers are a good cloak for their real work," dryly observed the old detective. "They are as expert as professionals."

"In that case they must be under the tuition of noted crooks," Harry replied. "I'm going to stop them at once or they will deplete the pockets of every woman on the block, and require a truck to carry away their booty."

"The masterful manner in which they are getting away with those things shows that they are no novices at the job," remarked the old detective reflectively. "It's my impression that they've been doing this sort of work for a long time past."

"You grab the big one, and I'll take the little one."

"Don't be so hasty."

"It's folly to let them continue."

"No; it isn't. They'll have a good load soon."

"And then?"

"Won't they have to unburden?"

"Of course."

"Let them be. I want to see who gets the swag."

"Reach headquarters, eh?"

"Yes. By so doing we can nip the whole game in the bud."

"There they go, now, toward Sixth Avenue."

"Follow them. See that they don't pass the goods to any one."

Away darted the two boys.

The Bradys were in hot pursuit.

Chasing the boys well over toward Ninth Avenue, they saw the pair finally turn into a well-known fence.

It was apparently an old curiosity shop, and the owner was a thin little man, with an enormous red nose, a pair of little pig's eyes, and a bald head.

He wore a straw hat and an old gray suit, as he stood at the door of his store and the boys came up.

The detectives saw him speak to the young thieves, and the three passed into the gloomy little store and vanished.

Peering through the open door the detectives saw them go into a back room. It made the officers smile.

Beside the store was an alley.

Running into it, the detectives reached the back yard.

The windows of the rear apartment were open, and as the two detectives crept over to them, they gained a view of the interior.

Fitted up as a general living room, the apartment contained the two boys and the sly old receiver of stolen property.

He was talking to the young thieves.

Crouching under the window sills the detectives heard

every word uttered, and their presence remained un-expected.

The boys were pulling an assortment of booty from their pockets, and laid it in a heap on the table.

Isaac Quinn, the fence, was examining the stuff.

"You've done very well to-day, boys; very well indeed," he was commenting, and chuckling. "My—my! how busy you've been. Why, I'll have to give each one of you five dollars for all this stuff. Just think of it—five dollars apiece."

"Well," replied the big boy, "fork over de dough. We want ter git back ter work agin. Dem wimmins be's jist flockin' in de street ter-day, an' I ain't never seen 'em so careless before."

"Don't be impatient, Jimmie," chuckled the old fence. "Take your time. Take your time. There's no hurry, my boy. Look at Benny there. He is as cool and quiet as a kitten."

"Ah, gwan!" replied the smallest boy. "Dat don't say I ain't in jist as much of a hurry as me pal."

"How ambitious you boys have become, to be sure," laughed Isaac, with secret satisfaction. "That's right, though. I like to see it. Keep it up, boys, and some day you'll be rich men. Goodness knows Yellow Jack spent enough time teaching you two and the other boys all you know about gathering in these articles."

"Say," said Jimmie, "ain't he yer partner here?"

"That's my business," blandly answered Isaac. "Now here is your money, boys. Run along, now, and be very careful lest the police catch you at work. If you git caught, always bear in mind you'll go to Elmira Reformatory, or you may do a stretch at one of the Protectories. You would not like that, would you?"

"Naw," replied Benny, shuddering at the bare mention of those dreaded names. "All's I'm most afraid of, though, is de Gerry Society. Dem is mighty flip, an' onct dey gits deir paws on us kids dat's de end of us fer sure."

Isaac laughed and patted their heads.

"Don't get careless and you won't get in trouble," said he.

"Well, so long."

The young rascals were just about to depart when the Bradys sprang through the windows.

Harry seized each of the boys by their necks.

Old King Brady's hand landed on the collar of Isaac's coat.

"Caught!" he exclaimed.

"What!" roared Isaac in horror.

"Coppers!" Jimmie groaned.

"Yes; coppers," said Harry.

That settled all their doubts and filled their minds with the most harrowing thoughts.

It was quite evident to them that they were in serious trouble, and it filled them with blank dismay.

For a few moments there was a deep silence.

Then Harry linked the two boys together with his handcuffs.

"You fasten Isaac to the boys with your fetters," said Harry.

Old King Brady complied.

The three were thus all strung in a line.

One could not get away without dragging the other. Escape was thus rendered almost an utter impossibility.

When they were fastened, Old King Brady said:

"Go and bring up a patrol wagon, Harry. While you are gone, I'll keep guard over the prisoners."

"Very well," assented Harry.

"When we put these beauties behind the bars we can watch and wait here until some of Mr. Quinn's friends materialize."

Harry hastened out.

There was a gloomy look on Isaac's face.

"Let me lock up the store," said he. "See all the valuables lying around here. While I'm away some crook might come here and clean out the place. I can't afford that, you know."

"We intend to take possession here now."

"I'm ruined!" groaned the old fence.

The patrol soon came dashing up to the store, and Old King Brady marched his string of prisoners out to the street.

Sending Harry away with them on the wagon, Old King Brady returned to the interior of the store.

Then he hid himself.

He did not have long to wait ere two men came in.

One of them seemed to be a lame man, with a patch over his eye, and the other wore a snowy-white beard.

But the moment they were well into the store, these disguises were abandoned, and the old detective saw that the pair were none other than Yellow Jack and Bug-House.

"The very ones I am most anxious to meet," thought Old King Brady, as he prepared to spring from his covert.

CHAPTER XII.

CLEANING UP THE DOWN TOWN DISTRICT.

"Hey, Isaac!" shouted Yellow Jack, glancing around. "Isaac Quinn! Where in thunder are you, I'd like to know?"

"Here I am," answered Old King Brady in muffled tones.

He was crouching behind a screen.

As the two crooks approached him, he stepped out before them, a brace of revolvers in his hands, which he was aiming at them.

The crooks paused.

Cries of alarm escaped them.

"What's this?" hoarsely gasped Yellow Jack.

"You are under arrest," answered the detective.

"For what?"

"Pocket picking."

"Who are you, a detective?"

"Old King Brady."

"Jerusalem."

They were frightened and amazed.

Glaring at each other in dismay, the crooks were overcome by a sudden panic of alarm, and Old King Brady cried:

"Hands up!"

"Don't fire!" groaned Yellow Jack.

"I will if you resist."

There was a big statue standing close to the detective.

Yellow Jack suddenly became possessed of a plan whereby he thought he could make his escape.

When he had his plan formed, he suddenly kicked the statue and the heavy marble figure toppled over.

As the detective saw it falling toward him he nimbly sprang out of its way to avoid being crushed.

The moment his pistol was turned in another direction, Yellow Jack dashed out the door.

Seeing this, Old King Brady shouted:

"Halt! or I'll kill you."

"Blaze away," recklessly said Jack.

And he continued to run.

Bang! went the detective's pistol before he had time to take proper aim, and the ball whistled past Jack's head.

Before the detective had a chance to fire again the villain dashed out into the street and vanished.

Not to be defeated entirely, Old King Brady rushed over to Bug-House, who was crouching in terror against the wall thinking he was going to get shot.

"Don't kill me," yelled the crook.

"Fall on your knees."

"Yes! Yes!"

And down he went.

The detective handcuffed the man.

He then thought:

"I'll have the other soon."

"What am I pinched for?" asked Bug-House.

"Robbing Pittsburg Peter."

"Oh, gosh! Who says I did?"

"We know all about it. You pawned the jewelry."

"Did any one blow?"

"Hungry Joe gave you away."

"He's a sneak."

"Never mind that. Where are the pawn tickets?"

"In my pocket."

"I'll take them."

And he drew them from the rascal's pocket.

Then he made the villain sit down and wait till Harry returned.

Having explained matters, Old King Brady sent the prisoner away to the station house in the boy's custody, and resumed his hiding-place to see if any more thieves came in.

When Harry returned and joined him, they spent the entire afternoon there.

Toward dusk three more boys came in, rushed back into Isaac's rear room, calling him by name, and the foremost shouted:

"Here's ther three of us, an' not one has copped out even so much as a handkercher. Say, Isaac, I——"

But here he was interrupted by Old King Brady seizing him while Harry attended to the other two.

All were badly frightened, and struggled to get away from their captors. But they had no success in that direction.

When they had them secured, Harry asked the biggest one:

"What's your name?"

"Dan," whined the boy.

"And the other two?"

"Phil and Ratty."

"Are there any more in your gang?"

"Two. Ben and Jimmie."

"Is that all?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who's your boss?"

"Yellow Jack."

"He's the captain of your gang, eh?"

"He's the one who taught us to steal."

"And you give the swag to Isaac?"

"Always; that's Jack's orders to us."

"How much does Isaac pay you?"

"Whatever he thinks the things are worth that we fetch in."

"Do you make much?"

"About ten dollars a week apiece."

"Just enough to tempt you and incite you on to steal more."

"All of us are poor and glad to get the money."

"What does Isaac do with the swag?"

"Sells the goods to peddlers, and keeps the money and jewelry."

"How long has this been going on?"

"About a month."

"Any of you ever arrested?"

"No, boss; this is the first time."

"You'll catch it now, for being so bad."

"Oh, say, Mister, won't yer let us go, an' we'll never swipe nothin' ag'in as long as we live," pleaded the boy, as tears ran down his cheeks, and he sniffed.

"No; we won't do that," replied Harry. "I'm sorry enough for you. But New York is getting overrun with all kinds of thieves, and we must put a stop to the pilfering. You knew the difference between doing right and wrong, and chose the latter course. As you were aware of the penalty of being caught, and kept right on stealing, you'll have to be punished for it."

All the boys began to yell and cry.

The most dreadful ideas took possession of them.

Every one wished he had behaved honestly, and they vowed that if they got out of the trouble they then were in they would never again commit a dishonest act.

The detectives believed this.

"A boy," whispered Old King Brady to his partner, "can be taught a lesson, and will profit by it. But very few men who become hardened to crime are improved in their morals by a term in prison."

Night fell upon the scene.

As there was no prospect of any more crooks falling into

their trap, the detectives locked the store door, and took their young prisoners away.

On the following day all hands were tried and sentenced, and the Bradys secured the pawn tickets for Pittsburg Peter's jewelry and recovered the swag. It was turned over to the plunger.

In a conversation Old King Brady had with Hungry Joe he ascertained that but few of the gang of pickpockets who had been working the shopping district were left.

The crook gave him their names.

"Besides Yellow Jack," said the old detective to his boy partner when they left the court, "there are only two men and a woman left of that gang. We have captured all the boys."

"And who are the remainder of the crowd?" asked Harry.

"One is Andy Varden, and the other is Rob Miller. The woman is that beautiful confidence queen, Inez Taylor."

"I've met every one of them before," said Harry, "and I'd know them the moment I saw the bunch. Are they working alone?"

"Separately most of the time, but when the occasion demands it, they join forces," replied Old King Brady.

"What neighborhood are they working?"

"At One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street."

"Then we've got the whole crowd who were working the down-town shopping district, eh?"

"Every one of them. Yellow Jack had his gang divided up. One bunch worked Fourteenth Street, another Sixth Avenue, and the boys operated on Twenty-third Street. The last three are up in Harlem. We must go up there tomorrow, and find them."

"Where are you going now?"

"To the saloon on the corner of Eighth Avenue and Twenty-third Street to which we were tipped off. Perhaps we may find Yellow Jack there now, Harry."

The boy nodded, and they went up-town together.

CHAPTER XIII.

LISTENING TO A PLOT.

It was eight o'clock when the Bradys reached the saloon on the corner of Twenty-third Street and Eighth Avenue, where they expected to find Yellow Jack. They passed into the place, glanced around, and failed to see any sign of the king of the pickpockets.

"We'll wait," said Old King Brady, sitting down at a table in the back room. "He may come in later on, and there's no telling but what Inez Taylor, Andy Varden and Rob Miller may come in, too."

"As the latter three are working the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street shopping district," replied Harry, "they are not apt to show up here."

"There's no telling," said the old detective, taking a chew of tobacco. "They may drop down this way at night, you

know, to meet their captain. They must all know by this time that we've caught all the rest of the gang who are working this neighborhood. The newspapers were full of the way we arrested, convicted and had the whole crowd sent to jail, and every one was particularly angry about Yellow Jack making thieves of those five boys, and at Isaac Quinn for receiving the swag."

"As the whole bunch are out of the way, we need bother no further about them," said Harry.

"I'm going to have Quinn's curiosity shop watched."

"What for?"

"You know he is Yellow Jack's partner."

"What of it?"

"There's a valuable stock in the Twenty-third Street store, and Jack will doubtless be very anxious about it. That will be sure to bring him there, sooner or later, if we don't capture him in the meantime. Then we will stand another show to capture the villain. I firmly believe that if we can dispose of him we will thus put a stop to most of the pocket picking going on around here."

"I hope we'll collar him, then."

"Hark! Some one is coming."

They remained silent as several men came in, and pretended to sleep.

All the newcomers were flashily dressed, and as they sat down at a nearby table, Old King Brady muttered:

"By Jove! It's Yellow Jack and the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street gang."

"Sure enough. They don't recognize us, either."

"The girl alone is missing."

"See if you can overhear what they say."

Listening intently, as the crooks continued to converse in low tones, they heard Yellow Jack say:

"Our combination is busted."

"How did it come about?" asked Andy Varden, who was a tall, thin man, with side whiskers and eye-glasses.

"Do you know the Bradys?"

"Heard of them."

"They've pinched all the gang but you fellows."

"That's mighty bad news."

"I expect they'll have you next."

"That's encouraging."

"Beware of them. They are demons."

"We'll keep a lookout for the pair."

"Remember, they always go about disguised."

"Oh, they can't fool us that way."

"Why not?"

"Because we know a disguised man the moment we see him."

"You must be a keen one, Andy."

"It comes of long practice."

"Well, what's the layout now?"

"I've got a good plan whereby we can make money."

"Name it."

"I'm going to. Just listen to this for a proposition."

The others went nearer to Andy Varden, and he lit a

cigar, puffed at it reflectively for a few moments, and then said in low tones:

"Pocket-picking, pocketbook snatching and all those grafts are getting played out in this burg. The women in the shopping district are getting as fly as we are, and don't keep their leathers and their sparklers where we can reach them as handily as we used to."

"True for you, Andy," assented Yellow Jack in serious tones.

"I've made a new invention to carry out my plans."

"What is it?"

Varden drew a long, slender pair of scissors from his breast pocket and held them up to the view of his companions.

The blades were exceedingly keen.

The handles terminated in two razor-like knife blades, instead of two finger holes, and while one was curved, the other was straight.

"What in thunder is that tool?" queried Yellow Jack, curiously.

"That's a machine one can manipulate in a crowd, or in a car," explained Varden. "I can sit down beside the paymaster of a boss builder riding in a car, with his pants pockets stuffed with the pay envelopes of his masons and laborers. These men only carry large amounts in satchels. Plasterers carry their money loose in big wads of bills, and parcels of halves, quarters, dimes and nickels. Once alongside of my man, a few cuts and clips with this tool will slit his pants, and cut out the pocket containing the money with the greatest ease. He wouldn't feel it."

"Show us how it works."

"I will when we leave this place."

"Is that your plan for making money?"

"No; it's an incident. I want you all to adopt it, and you'll soon have all the coin you want. All you have to do is to have a man watch the offices of the big builders in those buildings, principally on Fifth Avenue near Eighteenth Street. When the paymaster comes out your man can point him out to you, and with this instrument you can do the rest."

"What is your new plan?"

Varden glanced around and saw the Bradys.

They were apparently asleep, with their arms on the table in front of them, and their foreheads resting on their arms.

"Who are those guys?" he asked.

"Oh, a couple of bums," carelessly said Yellow Jack.

"Sleeping?"

"Don't you hear them snore?"

"Likely to listen to us?"

"No. But don't speak out, if it's risky business."

"Oh, I guess I can chance it. Come closer, so I won't have to blow myself loud enough for them to hear."

They crowded still closer.

Varden bent nearer to them and whispered:

"Every day at two o'clock a cab pauses before the door of Burns & Co.'s store on Sixth Avenue. The cashier of the concern comes out with a green leather bag. He jumps into

the vehicle and is driven to the bank. The bag contains the previous day's receipts of money at the store. He goes to the bank to deposit it."

"Well?" asked Rob Miller, expectantly.

"I propose to await him in the cab, to-morrow, armed with a bottle of chloroform and a sponge. I further propose to get out of the cab, while it is in motion, pass the bag to you, who must be awaiting me in another cab, and then——"

"What?" asked Yellow Jack.

"Oh, a mere matter of twenty or thirty thousand dollars will remain in our hands to be divided."

The others were struck by the boldness of this plan, and Yellow Jack bounced to his feet and remarked:

"That beats picking pockets, Andy."

"We will need the girl Inez in this plan."

"For what?"

"To hold the driver's attention while I get in the vehicle."

"You know where to find her, don't you?"

"Oh, yes."

"And where the cab can be found?"

"It comes from a stable in Eighteenth Street, near Seventh Avenue."

"Let's get Inez and perfect our plans."

They arose and passed out in the barroom, gave the Bradys a parting glance, and after having a drink, they departed.

When they were gone, the Bradys raised their heads, glanced at each other a moment, and burst out laughing.

"How careless they were," laughed Harry.

"Thought we couldn't hear their whispers. But I did not miss a word they uttered, did you?"

"Not a word."

"Well, what's to be done?"

"Frustrate their plot, of course."

"That will be no easy task."

"Oh, we can accomplish it."

"As there is no time like the present, I'm going right around to that livery stable, have a talk with the owner, and I feel pretty convinced we can catch those crooks in a trap."

"Going to notify Burns & Co.?"

"No. Our plan to baffle the crooks might leak out if I do."

They arose, glided out the side door and hurried away.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CAB DRIVER.

At half past one o'clock on the following afternoon, a cab to which a spirited horse was harnessed was driven out of a livery stable on West Eighteenth Street by a driver in green livery.

The man had red hair, red eyebrows, a red face, and blue eyes, and there was a big rosette at the side of his glossy silk

hat, a long whip in his hand, and his white leather breeches were tucked into his top-boots.

Altogether, it was a very stylish rig.

The driver handled the reins with skill, and sent the horse prancing toward Sixth Avenue in the most approved manner.

In a doorway stood a young man and a flashily clad woman, earnestly watching the approaching vehicle.

As it drew nearer, the young woman ran to the curb, waved her gloved hand to the driver, and cried:

"Say, there! Stop a moment, will you?"

"Me?" asked the driver, glancing at her in some surprise.

"Yes: I want to speak to you."

"But this isn't a public hack."

"Never mind about that."

"Very good, lady."

And he drew up the horse at the curb.

The girl then opened one door of the cab, and peering in, she asked:

"Who owns this rig?"

"Sullivan, the liveryman."

"Down this street?"

"Yes; near Seventh Avenue."

"Do you suppose he would sell it?"

"Yes: if any one offered him enough money, miss."

The girl laughed, and, leaving the door wide open, she walked over to the wheel, and looking up at him, she said:

"I may buy this horse and carriage."

"Indeed!"

"How much is it worth?"

"I really could not say."

While they were speaking, the young man who had been in the doorway stole over to the carriage, got in, and remained quiet.

It was done so rapidly and slyly that the driver failed to see him do it.

The girl observed his actions out of the corner of her eye.

"Well," she said, "I'll call to-morrow to see your boss, and see if I can't strike a bargain with him."

"Do, miss."

"Where are you going now?"

"To Burns & Co.'s store."

"Oh, I see. Much obliged."

"Don't mention it, miss. Good day."

And he was about to drive away when the girl cried:

"Oh, dear! I didn't close the door. Wait a moment."

She banged it shut.

"Thank you," said the driver, touching his hat.

"Good day," said she, with a smile.

And off went the cab, carrying the young man inside.

It finally reached the great dry goods store, pulled up at the door, and the driver nodded to the man in livery on the sidewalk, whose business it was to attend to the carriages.

He went inside and notified the cashier that his cab was waiting to take him to the bank.

A few minutes later the cashier came out, carrying his leather bag containing thousands of dollars.

With a quick stride he crossed the pavement, flung open the carriage door and threw his bag inside.

A pair of sinuous hands shot out the door, the fingers seized him by the throat, he was choked and dragged into the vehicle.

A voice cried: "Go on, driver," and the door banged shut.

Away rolled the cab.

No one had seen the tragedy.

The young man clutched the cashier by the throat, smothering his cries, and clapped a sponge saturated with chloroform to his victim's nostrils, in order to stupefy him.

The cashier was taken off his guard.

He was helpless.

The grip on his throat choked him.

He struggled feebly.

When he drew in his breath, he inhaled the chloroform.

It made his brain reel, and his senses fly.

His bulging eyes rested upon his assailant.

But he saw no features, for they were hidden behind a black mask, with which the young man concealed his face.

Swiftly the drug overwhelmed him.

He suddenly fell back limp and unconscious.

A chuckle escaped his captor, and he muttered exultantly: "He is at my mercy, and the money is mine."

He felt the weight of the bag.

It was quite heavy.

Next he began to think of how he was to get out of the cab.

The driver had whipped up his spirited horses, and the equipage was dashing along at a terrific rate.

To alight going at such a furious rate of speed would have been sheer nonsense.

He hesitated.

"I must wait till he pulls up before the bank," Varden cogitated. "Then I can step out and walk off."

With this reflection he settled back in the soft cushions.

On raced the cab some distance.

Finally it paused.

The driver alighted and opened the door.

"The bank, sir," said he.

Varden seized the bag of money and leaped out.

He found a revolver staring him in the face.

It was in the driver's hand.

He recoiled, startled.

"Good Lord!" he gasped.

A chuckling laugh escaped the driver.

"Hands up!" ordered he.

Down dropped the bag, and up went the man's hands.

"Don't shoot me," he begged.

"Andy Varden, you're my prisoner!"

"Prisoner?"

"Yes. Don't you recognize me?"

"No."

"I am Old King Brady," said the driver.

He pulled the wig, hat and false eyebrows from his head, and the crook saw the familiar features of the old detective.

"I'm lost—lost!" he groaned.

The detective drew a pair of handcuffs from his pocket.

"Give me your wrists," said he.

Reluctantly the man obeyed, and the fetters of steel were snapped on his arms, and he gasped:

"How did you get next to my game?"

Old King Brady told him.

Then he added:

"I went to the livery stable, made up to look like the driver who always took the cashier to the bank, took his place on the cab, and went to meet you. See this building?"

"Yes; it's a police station."

"Exactly. Knowing what transpired I drove so fast you dared not venture to escape, and brought you here."

"What a fool I was."

"Of course you were."

Just then Harry joined them.

He had been waiting for the cab at the police station.

"Got him pat, eh?" he asked smilingly.

"Take the bag, Harry."

"I've got it."

"Send out the police surgeon."

The boy carried in the bag, and while Old King Brady was leading his prisoner into the station, the doctor came out.

He hurried over to the cab with restoratives.

Finding the cashier stupefied, he began to work over him assiduously, and finally began to revive him.

Old King Brady arraigned his prisoner.

The charge was taken, Varden's pedigree was written in the blotter, and the prisoner was locked in a cell.

When the detectives got outside again, they found the cashier had revived and stood on the pavement.

The Bradys told him what happened.

He got in the cab with his bag, the detectives brought him to the bank, the money was deposited, and then they drove him back to the store.

He insisted upon their going in.

They finally complied. All entered the store, and they went to the manager's office.

CHAPTER XV.

THE OLD WOMAN IN BLACK.

When the manager of the great dry goods store learned what the Bradys had done for them, he was a grateful man.

"I can scarcely express my feelings in empty words," said he, emotionally. "But I can assure you gentlemen that the enormous obligation you have put upon us shall soon be properly recognized."

"We want no reward," said Old King Brady, "but we do want you to exercise more care in future about the way in which you send around such large sums of money."

"Of that you can rest assured, sir."

"These metropolitan crooks are no ordinary men," the old detective proceeded. "They are men of intelligence. They have gone about this robbery systematically. First

they conceived the idea that you took in huge sums of money every day. They inferred that you deposited it. Next they began a system of spying to find out when and where you deposited it, and they spotted the man who carried it to your bank. When they learned your custom in this respect, it was a very easy matter for them to plan a method of stealing the money from your cashier when he went to the bank."

"Of course. And the boldness and audacity of the crooks is what insured the success of their plot."

"Others may try the same game on you in the future," said Old King Brady. "Your safest course in future will be to have two men go to the bank."

"So we shall. Are there any more of the gang?"

"Yes. Two men and the young woman are yet at large."

"As long as they have their liberty they will be a menace to the shopping district."

"We are aware of that," said the detective, "and it is going to be our business to arrest them as soon as we possibly can do so."

The detectives soon afterward departed.

"It's a pity we don't know where their rendezvous is," said Old King Brady, as they strolled up the street. "Yellow Jack and the man and woman will doubtless be waiting somewhere to meet Varden and divide the swag. If we knew where the place was we could descend on the trio and rake them in."

"Have you made any effort to pump Sammy Gunn, Ida King, or Dick Plummer? They ought to know where the gang could be found at a permanent address."

"They won't give their pals away," growled Old King Brady, taking a fresh chew of tobacco. "This gang is very faithful. I never saw a band stick together so well. They won't tell on each other for anything. That's what makes our work all the more difficult. If we could find an informer, we would soon have the whole bunch. No, we must rely entirely upon the keenness of our own work to arrest these pickpockets, Harry."

They reached the corner of Twenty-second Street, and paused at the window of a store where a huge crowd of shoppers stood looking in.

Just then a little old woman came hobbling up the street with a cane in her hand. She was clad in a rusty suit of widow's weeds, with a black crepe veil over her face.

Bent over, and apparently tottering with old age, she brushed against Old King Brady, paused a moment, and asked in squeaky, trembling tones, as if she had no teeth:

"Shay, young man, can you tell me what time it is?"

Casting a pitying glance at her, the old detective pulled out his gold watch, glanced at it and replied:

"Half past two, madam."

"Thank you," said the old woman, nodding.

He placed the watch in his pocket.

The old woman handed him a card upon which was written: No. 600 Sixth Avenue."

"Can you tell me where zhat plash is?" she asked.

The detectives peered at the card, their sympathy aroused as they were anxious to aid the old creature.

"Yes," said Old King Brady. "We can direct you." And he told her near what street that number was.

She thanked him and hobbled off, muttering to herself.

"Poor old woman," commented Old King Brady, sympathetically.

"She's very infirm," said Harry, "and—— Gee!"

"What's the matter?"

"Your watch chain is dangling."

"Thunder."

He clapped his hand to his pocket.

A cry of amazement escaped him.

"What ails you?" queried Harry.

"My watch is gone."

"Stolen?"

"Of course."

"Only that old woman could have taken it."

"Just my opinion. I glanced at it to see the time a moment ago, and not a soul was near me but her ever since then. Ha! What's this?"

It was a small folded piece of paper in his watch pocket.

He drew it out, glanced at some pencil writing on it, and cried:

"For impudence this takes the premium."

"What is it?" queried the boy, curiously.

"Read it."

He handed the paper to his partner.

Yiung King Brady then read the following lines:

MY DEAR BRADY:—I've got your watch. You are a bum detective. How can you save other people's valuables if you can't guard your own? I did this to show you how incompetent you are.

YELLOW JACK.

The detectives were deeply mortified.

It was a crushing blow to their pride to have the very thief they were after come up and deliberately rob them in broad daylight.

"That old woman must have been Yellow Jack," said Harry.

"What a clever disguise he wore."

"But what has become of him?"

"There he goes up the avenue," Old King Brady answered.

"He asked for the time to see if you had a watch, and must have had the note prepared. When he picked your pocket he must have slipped the note into the pocket. By handing us that card to read, he diverted our attention from what he was doing."

"That's evident."

"Run after him."

They rushed up the street.

The seeming old woman glanced back and saw them.

Suddenly straightening up to the proportions of a man, and lifting up the black skirt, the crook rushed away, showing a pair of pants legs below the hem of the skirt.

The officers now were sure it was a man.

He ran like a deer.

After him sped the Bradys.

The peculiar sight of two men racing up Sixth Avenue after an old widow attracted a great deal of attention.

People stopped and looked at them in amazement.

When they observed the man's pants legs showing under the skirt, a broad grin overspread their faces.

Along they rushed for several blocks.

The Bradys gained on the fugitive.

Reaching Twenty-seventh Street, the crook turned to the left and suddenly disappeared around the corner.

When the detectives reached the corner he had vanished.

They hastily made inquiries of passing people in an effort to find out what had become of the fugitive.

There were a great many negroes in that locality, but no one seemed to have seen the seeming old woman in black.

She had disappeared as completely and mysteriously as if she had melted into thin air and blown away.

And Old King Brady's watch had gone with her.

It was maddening to the old detective.

After spending an hour vainly searching for the fugitive, the detectives finally gave up the hunt.

"The man and the watch are gone!" said Old King Brady.

"Yellow Jack is certainly the most impudent thief on record," the boy replied. "He fooled us well, and no mistake about it."

They went home.

On the following afternoon at headquarters a letter came in for Old King Brady, and he opened it.

There was a brief note and a pawn ticket in the envelope.

The note said, tauntingly:

"OLD KING BRADY:—I have soaked your watch for all I could get, and wish to sell you the enclosed ticket for it. If you wish to buy it, send me ten dollars. If not, return it to
"YELLOW JACK."

With a feeling of unutterable rage and chagrin the old detective handed the letter to Harry to read, saying:

"He is adding insult to injury."

"You can get the watch back, at any rate."

"I'm more determined now than ever to arrest that man."

"To do that you'll have to catch him."

"He's too reckless to run away from the city."

"True. And it's bound to lead to his misfortune in the end."

They then went down town in a car, and a startling incident occurred during the trip that changed the entire course of events.

CHAPTER XVI.

PUTTING UP A STIFF FIGHT.

The Bradys sat in a corner of a closed car, every seat of which was occupied, and a few people stood up in the aisle clinging to the straps.

Diagonally opposite the officers sat a prosperous looking, middle-aged business man reading a newspaper.

He was clad in black, and wore a dark felt hat; there were gold-rimmed eye-glasses perched on his nose, and a big diamond stud glittered in his white shirt bosom.

Beside him sat a man with whiskers, also reading a newspaper.

Neither of these men seemed to be paying the slightest attention to each other, and the Bradys might not have given them more than a casual glance but for one thing.

Harry heard a quiet ripping sound.

It only lasted an instant, and was very sharp and penetrating.

A few minutes later it was repeated.

The boy's curiosity was aroused.

As the sound seemed to come from the direction occupied by the two men just mentioned, the boy glanced keenly at them.

He caught the flash of a bright, metallic object.

It was between the two men, half hidden by their newspapers.

The boy shot a keen glance at it.

He now saw that it was a long, slender pair of scissors in the left hand of the bewhiskered man.

The keen blades were snipping the side of the other man's pants, silently cutting a good sized opening in the cloth.

It was being done so adroitly that the victim did not feel it.

The snipping sound had come from a jolt of the car causing the scissors to slip, whereupon the fellow who wielded them quickly laid them behind his back.

Finally he drew them out with extreme caution, and slid them over to his neighbor, and commenced cutting again.

Young King Brady quietly called his companion's attention to what was going on, and both watched the game.

A circular piece of cloth was presently cut from the side of the man's trousers, and then the pocket underneath was exposed.

The victim of this trick was so absorbed in his newspaper that he failed to notice what was being done.

Not a move escaped the detectives' eyes, however.

When the pocket was exposed, the scissors resumed their work, and a slit was cut in the cloth.

Then the scissors vanished into the crook's breast-pocket.

He had cut an opening into his intended victim's pocket, and now designed to extract the contents.

With this purpose in view, his deft hand stole over to the spot, and glided gently under the cloth.

They encountered a roll of bank-notes.

As the fingers closed over them, Harry leaped forward, brought both hands down on those pilfering fingers, and cried:

"I've got you."

A roar of surprise escaped the man.

He tried to tear his hand free, but could not.

His amazed victim dropped his newspaper and stared at them, while every one in the car leaned forward to see what was going on.

"Let go!" shouted the crook.

"You behave now, or you'll catch it."

The crook was desperate.

He hauled out the scissors and made a vicious lunge at Harry's face with them.

But Old King Brady observed the move, and caught him by the wrist, stopping the blow.

The villain sprang to his feet.

His victim's money dropped to the floor from his hand.

"You will let me go!" he panted.

Then he began to struggle furiously in the grasp of the two detectives, for he realized who held him.

His victim now picked up the money and saw how his trousers had been mutilated.

"He was robbing me!" he gasped.

It was all plain enough to him then.

The Bradys were having a terrific struggle with the desperate crook, the passengers were thrown into a panic, and as the conductor rang the bell, the people began to jump off.

To and fro struggled the detectives in their efforts to overpower the man, and despite their strength and agility, the crook succeeded in retaining his liberty.

The villain finally tore himself free of their grips entirely.

He instantly took advantage of his momentary freedom by diving head first out of an open window.

He landed on his shoulder in the street, knocked the false beard off his face, and scrambled to his feet.

"It's Rob Miller!" exclaimed Harry in surprise.

"Don't let him escape!" muttered Old King Brady.

They ran through the car to the front platform, sprang off, and darted across Herald Square after the crook.

He ran to the corner of Thirty-fourth Street.

A car was passing, and he sprang aboard, hurled the astonished motorman into the street, and seizing the controller, he turned it around to full power.

The car dashed down Thirty-fourth Street at a furious rate.

After it rushed the Bradys.

They did not expect such a trick as he played, and feared for a while that he would get away.

A doctor's carriage stood before a house ahead of the officers, and seeing that the car was swiftly distancing them, Old King Brady pointed at the vehicle and panted:

"We'll borrow that."

"Jump in," replied Harry.

Unhitching the horse from a post, they sprang into the carriage, laid the whip on the horse, and away they flew after the fast receding car, in the direction of the North River.

Out of the house rushed the doctor, waving his arms and yelling after the supposed thieves to come back with his carriage.

An exciting race now ensued.

The car kept gaining on the galloping horse, and the running doctor was soon left hopelessly in the rear.

When the car reached the Tenth Avenue curve, and swung

around to run up town, the sudden impetus threw it off the track and knocked the yelling passengers inside all in a heap.

"Now we can overhaul him," cried Old King Brady.

"There he goes leaping from the car," Harry added, as he pointed ahead at the desperate man.

"He can't run as fast as this horse."

"No. But he can go where the beast cannot."

"See. He is going right ahead toward the river."

"Whip up the nag again."

On they dashed at a lively gait.

Miller was a swift runner, and fear lent speed to his legs as he scudded down Thirty-fourth Street.

They drew near the river front.

He swerved there till he found an open dock, and seeing that the Bradys were now close behind him, he ran straight out on the pier.

He figured that if he went straight ahead they were bound to overtake him before he could travel two blocks further.

It dawned upon his mind that he might secrete himself under one of the piers or aboard of some ship, and as this last desperate chance was the only one left open to him he had to take advantage of it.

Ont on the pier he rushed, and with a rattle and bang the horse and carriage dashed after him.

Reaching the string piece he gave one glance back over his shoulder, and dove down into the river.

"There he goes overboard!" gasped Old King Brady, in disgust, for as he could not swim, he dared not follow the man.

Harry reined in the sweating horse, and they leaped out.

Rushing to the end of the dock, the boy flung off his coat and gaiters, and seeing Miller swimming rapidly away, the boy fearlessly plunged overboard after him.

Rising to the top, he struck out after Miller.

The boy was an expert swimmer.

He rapidly overhauled the pickpocket, and seized him.

"You won't get away," he cried.

Miller turned and grappled him furiously.

"I'll escape, or we'll drown together!" he panted, "for I will never again go to prison! I've sworn it!"

"Then we'll perish together!" said Harry, firmly, "for I'll either arrest you, or we'll both perish."

"So be it, then!" hissed the thief.

He flung his arms around the boy's neck, and as Harry could not keep himself afloat with the man holding him in that manner, they both sank.

A few bubbles came to the surface.

They were all that indicated where the pair had gone down.

CHAPTER XVII.

A GLASS OF DRUGGED WINE.

Old King Brady had not been inactive.

Running to the side of the pier, when Harry dove overboard, he saw a skiff tied to the piles below.

There was a pair of oars in the boat.

He at once dropped down into the skiff.

Picking up the oars, he rowed over to where Harry and Miller had sunk beneath the water.

Just as he reached the spot, they came up.

Both were exhausted, and Harry was placed at such a disadvantage that he looked as if the crook would drown him.

Raising an oar the old detective dealt Miller a blow on the head which caused him to relax his deadly grip.

He fell back and sank again.

Relieved of the man's weight, Harry easily kept himself afloat, and seized the crook again.

"Pull him into the boat," he panted.

"Are you all right, Harry?"

"Yes. Never mind about me."

"I'll get him."

He paddled the boat over to the spot where Miller sank.

Watching and waiting a few moments, he saw the crook's head rise again, and bending over the gunwale, Old King Brady seized him by the hair and dragged him up into the boat.

Miller was half drowned.

Then the detective looked around for his partner.

Harry had hold of the stern post of the boat.

"Help me in," said he.

Old King Brady complied.

Then he put a pair of handcuffs on Miller, and said quietly:

"I'll make sure of this slippery gent while I have the chance."

"Is he alive?" queried the boy.

"Yes; but he's half drowned."

"Get the water out of him."

They worked over the crook a while.

Finally he revived, and came to a realization of what happened.

A deep groan escaped him, and he said huskily:

"I'm beaten."

"Of course," Harry assented.

"And you've escaped with a whole skin."

"Luckily, I have."

Old King Brady rowed the boat to the dock, secured it there, and when they got the prisoner up, Harry wrung out his wet clothes, put them on again, and they marched the prisoner away.

They got into the doctor's carriage.

"I'm going to drive you to the police station now," said Old King Brady.

"I can't stop you," growled the pickpocket, sulkily.

"Then we must return this rig," laughed Harry.

"Where's Inez?" demanded Old King Brady of the prisoner.

"I don't know."

"You lie. You don't want to give her away."

"Why should I?"

"By aiding us you'll help your own case."

"Oh, I ain't a squealer. Do your worst. I'm ready."

"Very well. You're a big fool, though."

They drove off and locked him up.

Then they returned the carriage to its owner, and when he learned to what use it had been put he laughed and said:

"I'm glad you took and used it."

The Bradys apologized and left him.

They proceeded to the Twenty-third Street fence.

Isaac Quinn's place had been locked up after the raid, and a spotter had been left to watch it.

The man saw the Bradys coming and joined them.

"Any news?" queried Harry.

"No, sir," replied the spotter. "Haven't seen a sign of any of the crooks around here, much less Yellow Jack."

Just then Harry caught view of a stylishly clad young woman coming along toward them.

There was something about her that was rather familiar to him, and he pulled his companions into a hallway, and said to them:

"If the girl on the other side of the street coming this way isn't Inez Taylor, I'm no judge of crooks."

Old King Brady peered out at her.

"You've made no error," said he.

"Let's watch her. She wouldn't be prowling around this neighborhood for nothing, I can assure you."

The girl passed the fence.

They saw her scrutinize it closely.

She then retraced her steps.

After she had done this several times, they saw her cross the street, approach the door and try it.

Finding it locked, she peered in the window.

Then she hurried away.

"Chase her, Harry," said Old King Brady.

"I must change my appearance."

"You can do so in this hallway."

"She didn't come here for nothing."

"No, Harry. It's my impression that Yellow Jack sent her to see how the land lays before he ventures to come near the place."

"Will you remain here while I'm shadowing her?"

"Decidedly. She may send Yellow Jack here."

"Then I'll know where to find you."

The boy made a startling and rapid alteration in his looks by turning his hat and suit inside out.

The hat became an alpine and the sack coat was turned into a frock coat, after which a wig and false mustache completely altered the appearance of the boy's head.

Adjusting a pair of eye-glasses on his nose, and donning a pair of gloves, he rushed after the girl.

Harry was laden with cheap jewelry.

When Inez saw him trying to "mash" her, she set him down for a mighty easy and very desirable victim.

He was encouraged with an alluring smile, and spoke to her.

She paused, and they chatted a few moments.

In that brief time she was dazzled by his display of "fake" jewelry, and made up her mind to rob him of it.

"Going far?" he asked.

"Nowhere in particular," she replied.

"Let's go and dine at Riccadonna's," he suggested.

"Don't like the place," she protested. "I know a much better table d'hôte. It's called the Black Mouse, and it's on Eighth Street, not far from Sixth Avenue."

"That will suit me," said Harry.

They boarded a car and rode down town, chatting pleasantly, like old acquaintances.

There was rather a comical aspect to the situation.

While she was scheming to rob him, he was secretly planning to arrest her the moment she gave cause.

Alighting on Eighth Street, they walked eastward, and she finally paused before a dark, gloomy, old-fashioned house and said:

"Here's the place."

"I don't see any sign out."

"Oh, it's a private dining-room."

"Rather a deserted looking place."

"True; but it's exclusive, sir, and they have a fine chef."

"Well, we'll venture in. If it don't suit, we can easily leave."

She ascended the stoop and rang the bell.

An old negress opened the door.

"We've come for dinner, Sal," said Inez.

"Yeth'm," returned the old colored woman. "Come in, dearie."

They passed inside, and she banged the door shut and locked it.

Then she ushered them into a gloomy parlor, and pointing at a table already prepared for guests, the old darky said:

"Set down dar."

They complied.

"Bring a bottle of claret," said Inez.

"Yeth'm," the old wench answered, hobbling away.

She soon returned with a bottle of St. Julian, two goblets, and some cracked ice, which she set before them.

"Gwine fo' ter fetch yo' de bill ob fare," said she, departing again.

Inez filled both glasses, clinked hers against Harry's, and said:

"Here's to your very good health, sir."

"Drink hearty," replied the boy.

She nodded and smiled graciously, but he noticed that she did not drink a drop of the red wine.

As he held up his glass he observed a white sediment in it.

"Inez Taylor," said he, coolly, as he flung the wine upon the floor, "this stuff is doped. But, by thunder! you are not going to drug me with it, for I object to being robbed."

The girl turned pale, gave a scream and sprang to her feet.

"Who are you, anyway?" she demanded furiously.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

Harry Brady had a deep purpose in view in acting in such a manner as to bring matters to a sudden climax.

The boy suspected that Inez had pals near at hand, and he designed to draw them from cover at once.

He thus would know what he had to contend with, and could put an end to the state of doubt and uncertainty he was in.

The girl pickpocket was glaring balefully at him, deeply agitated by discovering that he knew her.

A reckless laugh escaped Harry, and he exclaimed:

"Never mind who I am. It's enough that I'm dead on to your curves, my lady. You can't knock me out with drugged wine."

"I never intended to," she retorted.

"I'm going to leave you now," said Harry, rising.

"You'll not leave this room," she hissed threateningly.

"Who is going to stop me?"

"I'll show you," she replied.

Reaching over, she pressed an electric button on the wall.

Harry awaited developments with an interested look on his face.

Presently the door opened, and Yellow Jack rushed in.

He had assumed a rough, angry expression, and clutched a big revolver in his hand, which he aimed at the boy.

"Drop on your knees!" he roared.

With a cool, indifferent smile, Harry faced him, slowly sized him up from head to foot, and lazily remarked:

"Sit down and behave yourself, old man."

"I'm going to shoot you if you don't obey," yelled Yellow Jack.

"Are you? Well, well, well! Don't you do it," replied the boy, quietly. "That's a very insane thing for you to do."

He thrust his hands in his pockets, strolled straight up to the blustering crook, and laid his hand on the pistol, adding, as he turned the weapon toward Yellow Jack's own body:

"Now blaze away, my boy; and if you've got a bullet in that gun there will be one crook less in this weary vale of tears."

Yellow Jack was astounded.

His bluff was a failure, and he gasped:

"You're the cheekiest man in New York."

"Nonsense," replied Harry, quietly. "I can see you haven't got the nerve to shoot a cat, much less a man. Your specialty isn't killing people, it's picking pockets."

"Well, of all the cast iron gall I ever——"

"Tut, tut, tut!" interrupted Harry. "You thought you had a safe snap to bunco me, didn't you? Well, you've really got one of the toughest propositions on your hands you ever met with. I want that gun. Give it to me."

He suddenly tore it from the crook's hands.

With a cry of alarm Yellow Jack tried to recover it.

But Harry backed away from him, leveled the pistol at the villain, and said quietly:

"Instead of me being your prisoner here, you are mine."

"We'll see about that!" threatened the scowling crook.

"Don't try any monkey business, now, or you'll get hurt."

"Ain't yer a disguised cop?"

"I am Young King Brady," roared the boy, suddenly, as

he flung off his disguise, "and I'm here to nab the pair of you."

They fairly cried out in astonishment.

The deadly revolver covered both of them.

With a despairing glance at each other, Inez gasped:

"This is the end of us!"

"We've been duped!" bitterly answered Jack.

"March out of this den ahead of me," said Harry, "and go quick, too, if you value your lives."

"Don't fire on us, then," pleaded Yellow Jack in alarm.

"I won't, if you behave. Here, let me put the steel bracelets on you. I want to harness you together as a team."

And ere they could resist him he manacled them together.

It was an easy victory for Harry.

He led them out, had them locked up and went after his partner, to whom he explained what he had done.

Old King Brady was more than pleased.

On the following day they appeared in court to prosecute the two crooks, and they, too, were put away for long terms.

"The arrest of those two virtually puts an end to the pocket picking so long going on in the shopping district," said Old King Brady, when they departed from the court.

And he told the truth.

From the moment they broke up that gang very few of the shoppers lost their valuables.

The Bradys had thus purified a portion of Sixth Avenue, and other streets, and were satisfied with their work.

And the case did not end any too soon.

The chief wanted them badly.

A startling crime had arisen which claimed the attention of the Bradys, and they were soon at work upon it.

The next issue of this publication gives a graphic description of the case, so we need not dwell upon it here.

For the present, however, we will part with the celebrated detectives, leaving them in the enjoyment of an ample reward Lacy & Co. gave them for getting rid of the pickpockets.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AND THE BROKER; OR, THE PLOT TO STEAL A FORTUNE," which will be the next number (142) of "Secret Service."

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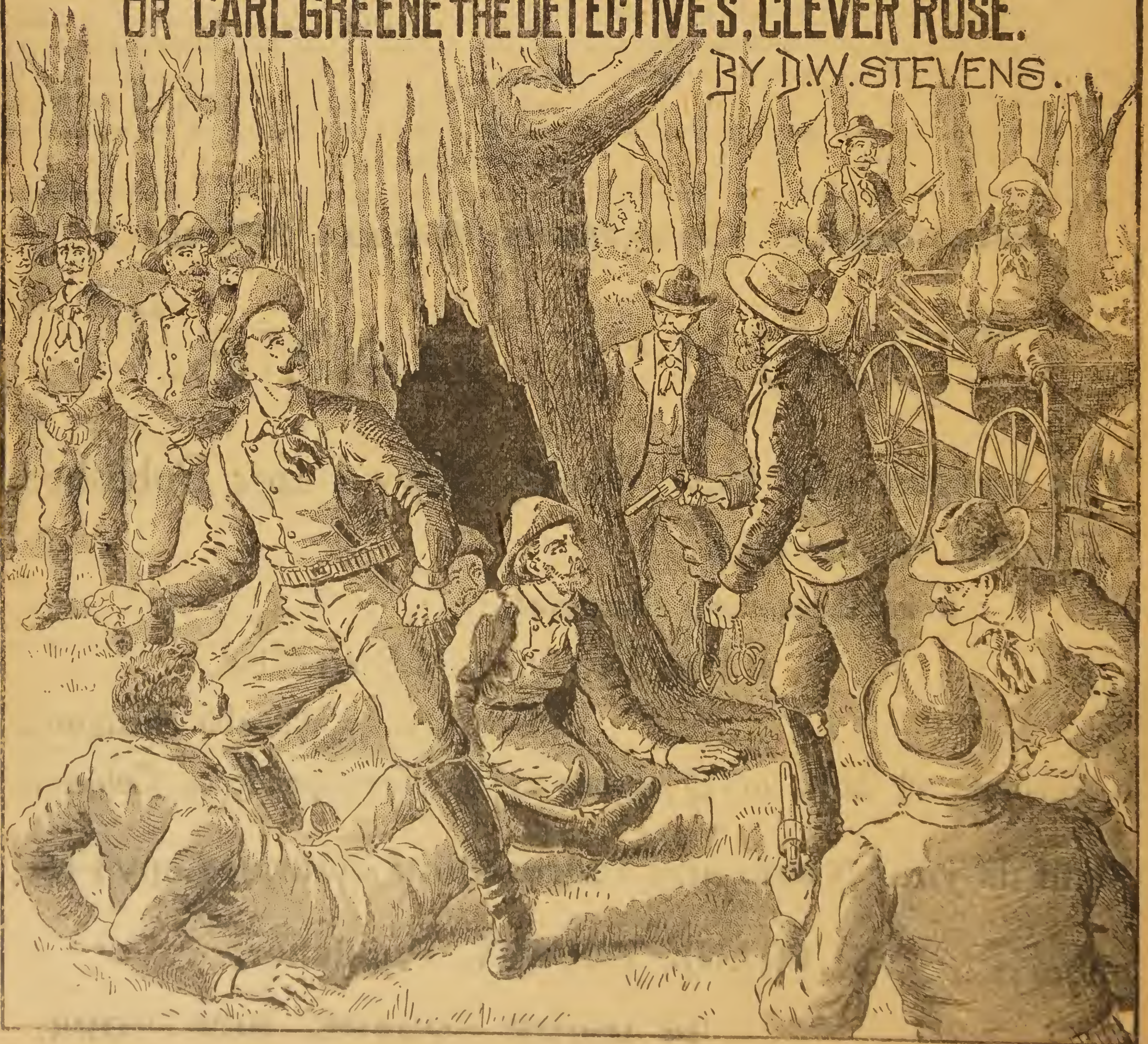
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